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AN  
EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
REVELATION OF JOHN,  
FROM  
THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

BY  
REV. JOEL MANN.



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AND FOR WHOSE BENEFIT THIS EXPOSITION WAS PREPARED  
AND DELIVERED IN THE FORM OF LECTURES,  
IT IS NOW GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

J. M.



## P R E F A C E .

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It is well known that a great variety of opinions have been expressed by distinguished theological writers on the Apocalyptic visions which compose the prophetic part of this truly wonderful book. This will not appear surprising when we consider the nature of symbolical language, and the difficulty of ascertaining its verification in the events of the past and the future. It has seemed to me a safe course to make the sacred scriptures interpret themselves as far as practicable ; and, as John has written on many of the same topics, and employed many of the same figures and emblems as did the ancient prophets, his language may, to a large extent, be interpreted by theirs.

Though I have been assisted by the valuable commentaries on the Apocalypse in common use, I have not taken them for my guides ; but have endeavored to examine these recorded visions for myself. In doing this, I have felt constrained to differ from them in some respects, which may be deemed important. And I have only to ask of those

who may dissent from the views I have expressed, that they will give the whole matter a thorough examination.

That the effect of these exegetical notes may be to cause people of all classes to study more critically the figurative language of the Bible, and to confirm all readers in a sincere belief of what God has revealed, is the fervent wish of the author.



## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

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AT the commencement of a critical and thorough examination of this most difficult of all the books in the sacred volume, it is important to fix in our minds certain principles of interpretation to guide us in our investigations. To these we should adhere as safeguards against the suggestions of imagination and the vagaries of ingenious speculation. We should adhere to them, though they should carry us wide from the track of those who have given interpretations of these prophetic teachings.

One of these principles is, that in order to ascertain the meaning of the revelator in a particular instance, the symbols, or emblems, must be explained. These are objects cognizable by the senses, designed to convey ideas of events civil or religious. Though there may be coincidences between the symbols and the things signified by them ; yet, in their nature they are entirely different. Thus, a *beast* is the emblem of an empire,—thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes, represent civil commotions, and revolutions,—and the woman sitting on a scarlet colored beast is “that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” To proceed to give an interpretation without first ascertaining the meaning of the symbol, is not explaining, but guessing.

Another principle is, that when the symbol or figure is adopted from the writings of the ancient prophets, or is the same as used by them, it should be interpreted as having a similar signification, so that, as far as practicable, one portion of divine revelation may explain another.

One other principle I give in the words of Woodhouse:—“Unless the language and symbols of Revelation should in particular passages direct, or evidently require another mode of inter-

pretation, *the predictions are to be applied to events occurring in the kingdom of Christ.* For," he remarks, "whenever sacred prophecy is seen to deviate from its peculiar object, it is in such instances only, wherein the fortunes of God's people have become necessarily involved with those of the heathen nations; and thus we find in the boundless mass of history to what kind of history prophecy is to be applied. When the people of God were to become subject to the four monarchies, the character, and succession, and fates of those monarchies were predicted; but the main object continually kept in view in the sacred history was their deliverance from those successive yokes by the superseding dominion of the Messiah. This supreme and universal dominion, gradually, and finally to prevail, appears to be the grand object of all sacred prophecy; and revolutions of worldly power among the Gentiles, seem noticed only at those times when they impede or promote it."

This book was doubtless written to be understood, for John was commanded not to seal up the sayings it contains, but to leave them open for the instruction and consolation of believers in every age. It is no presumption therefore, to assert that it can be understood, and he is pronounced "blessed or happy who keepeth the sayings of this prophecy." To keep them implies an understanding of them, and a belief of them. Indeed, a revelation which cannot be understood is no revelation at all.

A fact to be kept in view is, that these are *visions*,—representations made to the mind, not things actually beheld by the organs of sight. They were *seen* only in the sense in which we see things in a dream. They had no more real existence than the sheet filled with all manner of beasts, which Peter in a sleep saw let down from heaven. Many of the emblems never had a real existence anywhere; such as the monsters with unnatural members,—the locusts having shapes like horses, with crowns like gold on their heads, and faces similar to those of men,—and the woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet. Much of the imagery is the same as was used by the ancient prophets, and much of it has its prototypes in the Levitical economy.

Another fact is, that *the prophetic part of this book is wholly symbolic.* All its disclosures are made under emblematic representations, not unlike the hieroglyphics of Egypt. The first business,

and that too the most difficult, is to decipher the emblems, show their meaning, and their verification in the events of the past, or those which are to come in the future. A great error has been committed by understanding parts of these visions literally, and other parts figuratively in the same connection, where all is manifestly figurative. This throws confusion over the whole, and necessarily leads to an incorrect interpretation.

In numerous instances also, even professed expounders of the Apocalypse have given no explanation of the emblems, as if they deemed them unimportant, or because they knew not what interpretation to give. I regard it as a fact by no means to be overlooked, that John never introduces a figure or a symbol unmeaningly, or as mere ornamental costume. And he who would give a full and correct explanation of his language must pay particular attention to that fact. Much learning may be displayed in a philological and grammatical exegesis of this book, and very little light be imparted. The fatigued and discouraged reader may rise up just about as ignorant of the true meaning of these hierophantic visions as when he began.

The prophetic portion of this book, which it is my design to elucidate, commences with the fourth chapter. With a few general remarks on the introduction contained in the first chapter, I pass over the specific messages addressed to the seven churches which make up the two following chapters.

The source of these apocalyptic visions is declared to be God himself; and as Christ has ever been the Teacher of men, they were by him communicated to John by the instrumentality of an angel. The record of them was made in obedience to the command of Christ, and was sent to the seven churches in Asia Minor. The writer makes himself known as John the apostle and evangelist, by declaring that he was a cotemporary, and brother, and fellow-sufferer in tribulation with the members of those churches, and also by the fact that he was banished to the Isle of Patmos for his maintenance of God's truth, and his testimony concerning Christ.

It was on the Lord's day that the first of these visions was given to him, which was significant of the nature of the whole as pertaining to Christ and his church. He saw seven golden candle-

sticks or lamps, which, as he was immediately informed, were emblems of the seven churches; and in the midst of them *one like a son of man*,—not Christ himself, but an emblematic representation of him,—one having a human form. Daniel also had a visionary sight of one like a son of man, who came in the clouds of heaven,—to whom was given dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all nations should serve him. In both cases it is Messiah who is meant.

The ancient Hebrew prophet discoursed of the four great monarchies which were to have supremacy in the eastern portion of the world, the first of which, viz., the Chaldean, was then in the zenith of its glory. As three of those monarchies had existed their destined period, and had passed away, leaving only their broken fragments, John discourses of the fourth, which is the Roman, in which the destinies of the Christian church and kingdom of Christ were involved. And the attentive biblical reader will not fail to observe that the emblems and symbols which John employs are chiefly those which are found in the writings of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah.

This emblematic man standing among the lamps, is described as having the garb of a Jewish priest, his head surrounded with a glory,—his eyes like “a consuming fire,” denoting his mental penetration, and his power to destroy;—his feet like pure brass, regarded as the most durable metal, and polished to the utmost brightness, indicating, perhaps, the permanency of his government and the holiness of his ways, even in his most terrible judgments on mankind;—and his voice like the deep roar of cataracts, or that of the mighty ocean, which is heard afar off, showed that his word should be published by myriads of tongues, and command the attention and awe of mankind. The whole of this introductory vision, as it seems to me, was intended to show what Christ would *be* to his churches, and what he would *do* for them. Another symbolic representation of Christ is given in the nineteenth chapter, differing from this, but equally adapted to set forth the great things he will do for his cause in the world.

I remark also, that this book was probably written previous to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish commonwealth.

Whatever may be thought of the expressions,—*Things which must shortly come to pass*, and *The time is at hand*, the seventh verse seems to be a palpable intimation of that great catastrophe. With some variation, it is a repetition of the language which the Saviour used in his impressive description of that event as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew's gospel. An abrupt call is made for attention to something which is declared as if even then commencing. *Behold He cometh with clouds*, that is, with a great host,—clouds being a symbol of a multitude. He will be so manifested by remarkable events at that period, that in the figurative language of the writer, "*every eye will see him*," and particularly "*those who pierced him*." This last phrase is an evident designation of the Jews, and an intimation that this will take place in the lifetime of the crucifiers of the Lord. The sentiment is that the divine visitations upon them will be so peculiar and distressing, that they will clearly recognize him as an almighty avenger.

*And all the tribes of the land will wail because of him.* The incorrectness of our common translation has led most persons into the erroneous belief that this is the second personal coming of Christ; and so it has been quoted thousands of times. The reading which I have given makes the whole plain. The *land* is Palestine, and the tribes of it are the Jews, and his coming is providential or circumstantial, such as is expressed in numerous other passages of the sacred scriptures.



# EXPOSITION.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *God's Presence with His Church.*

THIS and the succeeding chapter may be regarded as preparatory to the visions which follow, and was intended to show that those visions relate to the Christian church, and that they were given by Christ, who takes the book, and opens the seals. In the first place, we are taught emblematically the important and encouraging fact, that the presence of God is with his church, that he governs it by his authority, and protects it by his power ; and that the church renders to him a pure and spiritual worship. This will appear as we come to speak of the throne and its glorious occupant in the midst of the adoring elders, and of those who lead their devotions.

Verse 1. *After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven : and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me ; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.* After the things detailed in the preceding chapters, the entranced apostle perceived a door opened in heaven. This expression is plainly symbolic, as there is no door in heaven. Something different in kind, as in all similar cases, is intended. Our first business should be to ascertain what that is. To say with Dr. Clark, that “ this appears to have

been a visible aperture in the sky," or with others that it is "an opening of the heavens," is not to give an explanation, but only to assert the same thing in other words. Taking it thus literally, as meaning only that there was an aperture in the empyrean, is to pass unnoticed the true signification.

A door *literally* is an entrance into a building or an apartment. *Metaphorically*, an open door signifies liberty, and opportunity to see or do particular things,—to take a new view,—or to enter a new sphere of action. Thus Paul says, 1 Cor. 16: 9, "*A great door and effectual is opened to me;*" that is, a favorable opportunity is afforded to me. So also, 2 Cor. 2: 12, *At Troas a door was opened to me by the Lord to preach the gospel.* Col. 4: 3, *A door of utterance.* Christ said, *I am the door*,—that is, by him only can any come to God, and obtain salvation. Or, take the writer's own use of the term, 3: 8, *Behold, I have set before thee an open door*, that is, abundant opportunity to do good by diffusing the light and privileges of the gospel. Again, 3: 20, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock*, signifying that Christ seeks admission to the hearts of men. In none of these instances is the word *door* used in a literal sense.

The term *heaven* in the Apocalypse, commonly signifies the visible church, or the civil government, or both united. Thus, when the third angel sounded, *there fell a great star from heaven*; which is admitted to mean the defection of a distinguished teacher *in the church* from sound doctrine, followed with baleful consequences. At the opening of the seventh seal, *there was silence in heaven for half an hour*; which is interpreted to signify "that there would be peace in the church and the empire for a short period." In the verse under consideration, the term *heaven* is probably used in the same sense; and thus, "*a door opened in heaven*," signifies that a prospective view was given to John of the coming events concerning the Christian church. An



opportunity was afforded him of looking at things which lay in futurity, pertaining to the kingdom of Christ. This explanation is immediately subjoined in the words addressed to him,—*Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.* No one doubts that the disclosures which were subsequently made relate to the Christian church. The opportunity and privilege of looking at those things which stretched far onward in futurity, viz.—the events of divine providence relating to the kingdom of Christ, was represented by a door opened in heaven.

A voice resembling the loud sound of a trumpet, called to the apostle to come as it were into the chamber of vision, and receive the disclosures which are recorded in this book. Under the Jewish economy the trumpet was an instrument used to announce something important to be done, and also to assemble the people to the feasts, &c. Such a voice in the instance before us, seems designed to impress the mind with the great importance of the things to be made known.

2. *And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.*—This may be considered as an explanation of what is meant by the command, *Come up hither.* He was put into a trance,—a state of insensibility to surrounding objects, so that the mind was wholly occupied with things supernaturally presented to it. The senses were for the time rendered inactive, and objects and ideas were presented to the mind by direct revelation. I perceive no reason for supposing that the apostle was transported bodily or spiritually to heaven, for none of the things shown him transpired in heaven,—none of the objects were located in heaven.

*And, behold, a throne was set in heaven.* Is not this a direct contradiction of the remark just made? It un-

doubtedly is so, if these representations are to be understood literally. Dr. Scott says with great propriety, "We ought not to suppose that the objects afterwards mentioned have a real existence in heaven; but they were visionary emblems, suited to give proper instructions to the apostle and his readers; and our chief business is to develop their meaning." This is the true statement of the matter, and it would have been happy indeed if he and other writers had invariably, from this verse to the end of the book, adhered to that principle. To awaken a common-sense train of thought, let me ask, Is there a real material throne in heaven, and is He, who in the eighth verse, is called the Lord God Almighty, seated upon it, like an earthly king? Is he not a pure Spirit, filling immensity, "whom no man hath seen, or can see?" Is it a real fact, that *to look upon, he is like a jasper, and a sardine stone, and that there is a rainbow about his throne in appearance like an emerald?* Such literalizing is in the highest degree absurd.

I understand this chapter to be a symbolic description of the Christian church, blessed with the abiding presence of God. The direct allusion undoubtedly is to the tabernacle and temple of the Jews, in each of which was a supernatural light over the mercy-seat, manifesting the divine presence as being ever with his people. John beheld mentally *a throne*, which is an emblem of governmental authority, and protection,—of ruling power. It was *set in heaven*, i. e., placed, established among his people in the Christian dispensation, as really, though not visibly, as in the former dispensation, agreeably to the promise, "I will be in the midst of them, and walk with them," or as Christ said, "I in them, and thou in me." The idea expressed is, that God's presence would be with his church permanently in all coming time, and that his authority and protection would be exercised over it and for its behoof. The being

who occupied the visionary throne is not named in this place, but is named in the adoration and praise subsequently given.

3. *And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone : and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*—The jasper stone was pellucid or clear, emblematic of rectitude, purity, holiness. The sardine stone was of a red color, emblematic of his justice, particularly as exercised in the punishment of his enemies. In this respect he is spoken of as a flame of fire, and “a consuming fire.” A *rainbow* surrounding the throne of a green color like that of the *emerald*, was a symbol of the covenant of mercy, and indicated that divine benevolence is ever exercised in conducting, guiding, and controlling the affairs of the church. See Ezek. 8 : 1, 4. The sentiment of the verse is, that God exercises his perfections, and manifests them to intelligent beings in administering his government for the good of his church.

4. *And round about the throne were four and twenty seats : and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment ; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*—Around the throne were twenty-four other *thrones*, (*thronoi*) on which were as many elders sitting, clad in white, indicative of their moral excellence, and wearing *crowns of gold*, indicative of their authority, or rather of the supremacy and dominion of the church. The allusion probably is to the twenty-four courses of the priests who presided over and performed the rights of the ancient dispensation. Or, the allusion may be to the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles, as representative heads of the church under both dispensations. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets ; and

believers are represented as being made both kings and priests to God. Under his government the church is to be made triumphant; as Daniel says, The saints shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever and ever.

5. *And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices.*—Lightnings and thunders are symbols of war and civil commotions,—voices of royal edicts and proclamations. The imagery is probably taken from what transpired at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. The idea seems to be that God will shake and convulse nations, and execute upon them signal judgments in subserviency to the welfare of his church. His purposes, his law, his threatenings, shall be carried into effect whatever may oppose.

*And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*—The seven lamps burning before the throne are explained to be the seven Spirits of God. As seven is a number of perfection, the Holy Spirit may be that which is meant. If so, their shining before the throne, and in the midst of the elders, signifies that it is the Spirit which illuminates, guides, and comforts the church, and that his cheering influences would ever be continued in it. The Spirit, by the truth, and by his operations in the soul, is the great illuminator,—the author of all Christian graces, and holy joys. The seven lamps in this instance probably refer to the golden candlestick with its seven lamps, placed both in the tabernacle and temple in the first apartment, called the holy place, and before the holy of holies, in which was the symbol of the divine presence. Into this apartment the priests entered daily performing their ministrations; and the lamps were kept burning day and night without intermission. These imparted all the light, which made things

visible in the holy place. A beautiful emblem of the illumination given by the Holy Spirit. This interpretation I prefer to that which makes these seven spirits to be seven ministering angels, which seems to be inapposite, and wanting in analogy.

6. *And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal : and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.*—Before the throne there was a crystalline sea, *i. e.*, a sea perfectly clear and transparent. Our common translation conveys the idea that the sea was made of glass, which is incorrect. This is another Jewish symbol, the allusion being to the brazen sea made by Solomon, ten cubits in diameter, and five cubits deep, placed in front of the entrance of the temple, and filled with water. The priests used the water to wash themselves, and the sacrifices, and the implements used. It is commonly considered as typical of the holy nature of the sacrifice which Christ offered, himself being innocent and holy. The location of this font before the entrance to the sanctuary, and before the throne, may teach, that it is through the washing of regeneration, and sanctification of the Spirit, that we are fitted to come into the divine presence to offer praises and supplications.

In the midst of the throne, or seat of authority, and around it, were four living creatures, improperly styled '*beasts*,' full of eyes before and behind. Isaiah and Ezekiel describe similar living creatures. In this vision of John they are probably intended to represent the ministers of the gospel, and being *in the midst of the throne* implies that they participate with Christ in the work of governing, watching over, and guiding the church, as he said to his disciples, '*Ye shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*' This they would do in

their official capacity as teachers and rulers of the Christian church. Their position nearest the throne is probably an allusion to the privileges and duties of the priests of old, who only were permitted to enter the holy place, the sanctuary, and shows also that Christ's ministers are meant by the four living creatures. Their numerous eyes before and behind, looking every way, are emblematic of their discernment, watchfulness, and carefulness in regard to all things affecting the interests of the church.

7. *And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.—The first living creature was like a lion.* Evidently all this is symbolic; moral qualities in men being represented by the peculiar qualities of these animals. The lion expresses courage and strength; the second creature, like a young bullock, expresses patience, docility, and endurance of hardship; the third, with a face as a man, expresses intelligence, wisdom and benevolence; the fourth, like a flying eagle, expresses discernment, elevation of purpose, and speed in the performance of duty.

8. *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, &c.*—Furthermore, each of these creatures had six wings, concerning which, Isaiah says, 6: 1-3, "with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew," expressing reverence, humility, and alacrity.

*They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*—Their employment is adoration and praise,—their lives are devoted to serving and glorifying God. It is evident, therefore, that these creatures represent intelligent, religious beings. They have a true perception of God as holy, om-

nipotent, and eternal. For these glorious attributes they adore him.

9, 10, 11. *And when those beasts give glory, and honor, and thanks, to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power : for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*—The eternal existence of Him who sat upon the throne is distinctly affirmed, and the four creatures devoutly ascribe to him glory, honor, and praise. Then the elders prostrate themselves in token of their deep reverence and unworthiness, and join in the worship. They also take the crowns from their heads, and cast them before the throne, signifying by that act, that their privileges and honors, as believers, are all given by God, and are to be held in subjection to his authority. They declare his worthiness to take and to have glory, honor, and power, as He who hath created all things, and according to whose will they have been made.

The fact that the four living creatures lead in this worship, and that the elders follow and join in it, shows, that the ministers of Christ and the church are represented by them ; and, if I mistake not, we are also taught, that the true ministry and true church will ever practice a pure worship. They will not corrupt it by introducing other objects than the Supreme Being for worship, but to him they will render the glory which is his due. The reference throughout the chapter evidently is to the Christian church in this world, and that here, not in heaven, are the things to be enacted, which are thus emblematically displayed. The main sentiment, as I regard it, may be thus

stated:—John had mentally a prospective view of the Christian church extending far into futurity, and was taught that God would ever be with it, and protect it, and would govern the world in subserviency to it. Thus his throne is spoken of as being in it. As the church under the ancient dispensation was designed to preserve and propagate the knowledge and the worship of the true God, in a world filled with ignorance and idolatry ; as it was, like its own Shekinah, a source of light in the midst of surrounding darkness ; so, according to this prophetic vision, the Christian church was designed to be the “light of the world,” the depository of divine truth, the great instrumentality for sustaining and diffusing the worship of God in its appropriate simplicity and spirituality ; and though there have been many and great corruptions and defections in doctrine and practice, the true church which is composed of renovated believers, will accomplish all for which it was designed, for “God is in the midst of her, and will help her right early.”

A confirmation of this interpretation is given in the construction of the language employed. All four of the verbs in the ninth and tenth verses, are in the future, and not in the present tense, according to our translation. Thus “*when the living creatures shall give glory, &c., the twenty-four elders will fall down, and will worship, and will cast their crowns before the throne.*” Now, if John intended to describe the worship then actually occurring in heaven, the present tense would have been the proper mode of expressing it. And as a narrative of what he had seen, though its signification referred to the future, he should have used the past tense, as he does in numerous other cases. The future form of the above named verbs seems to me designed to express, not the worship which was, or is now paid to God in heaven ; but to be prophetic of the



pure worship which the church of believers will uphold and practice on earth to the end of time.

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## CHAPTER V.

### *The Book with Seven Seals.*

THIS chapter is a further recital of the same vision.

1. *And I saw on the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.*—The disclosure of other things in the future is symbolically represented by a sealed book, to be opened by the Son of God. To the mind of the apostle, this book appeared held in the right hand of the glorious occupant of the throne. It probably consisted of seven pieces of parchment, connected together, and rolled upon each other; each piece having its seal upon the outer edge. How this was done, is not easy to determine: hence the many conjectures concerning it. The book contained predictions, as we may suppose, of events to transpire in successive periods of time designated by the seven seals; that is, there were to be a series of events, of such signal importance and peculiarity as to constitute so many epochs. Being in *the right hand* of Him who sat on the throne, indicates that the events to be disclosed were wholly under His control and direction. Being *sealed*, indicates that those events had not then been made known. God reveals his purposes at such times, and in such proportions, as he pleases. The same emblem is found in Ezek. 2 : 9, 10.

2 and 3. *And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the*

*seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.*—The inquiry by the mighty heraldic angel, plainly shows that he was not worthy to loose the seals, and make known the contents of the book. No created being in the universe was of sufficient rank and dignity to perform that work; or no person in the church, nor in any condition of life, was competent to remove the seals, and reveal what was to come. No one knoweth the will of God except the Son, and those to whom He reveals it. He only who was in the bosom of the Father knoweth the purposes of the Father intrinsically. Plainly, then, John was divinely taught, otherwise he could never have made this revelation of future things.

4 and 5. *And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.*—John's anxiety to know what was contained in the book, was like that of Daniel to understand what had been communicated to him concerning things to come. He is consoled with the assurance, that Christ had prevailed to do what he so much desired. Christ was descended from the tribe of Judah, and the lion was the emblem of that tribe, in reference to what Jacob said in blessing his sons—"Judah is a lion's whelp: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion. Who shall rouse him up?" (Gen. 49: 9.) In chapter 22: 16, Christ says—I am the root and the offspring of David. He was the root of David, as being his Creator and the Giver of all his wisdom and greatness; and his offspring, as being lineally descended from him. The expression, *hath prevailed*, is from a word which signifies also, to conquer, to

gain a victory, and implies the putting forth of great efforts. The history of our redemption shows what the conflict and what the victory was.

6. *And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*—There appeared in the midst of the throne, indicating a participation in governmental authority and power, and in the midst of the four living creatures and the elders, indicating His relation to the church as Prophet, Priest and King, as Teacher, Redeemer and Ruler, *a Lamb*, bearing upon him the marks of slaughter, yet alive. (1 : 18.) *I am he who liveth, and was dead.*

A horn is the emblem of power, and seven is probably, in this instance, a number of perfection. The seven horns of the Lamb, then, express the idea of the possession of great power. "He is mighty to save, even to the uttermost," "all power in heaven and in earth being vested in Him." His seven eyes are interpreted to be the seven Spirits of God; meaning, as in chapter 1 : 4, the Holy Spirit, from whom proceeds "grace" and "peace." Being sent into all the earth, probably signifies the shedding forth of the Spirit by Christ, for the conversion of men, and for the perfection of His people. By these symbols the whole work of Christ is disclosed; his revelation of the purposes and will of the Father, his atoning sacrifice, his exaltation to the throne of dominion, his ability to rule and to save, and his bestowment of the Spirit upon mankind.

7. *And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.*—The disposition, even in the learned, to view all these things literally, shows itself

in the useless discussions of the question, How could a lamb take and hold a book? The whole is symbolic; and John was not troubled about the congruity of what was presented to his mind in vision, and we need not be. The Lamb itself was a symbol, and his act was a symbolic act, having no real existence anywhere, except in the mind of the apostle. The signification of the act, as I apprehend, is, that Christ reveals to men what the Father hath given to Him to reveal, according with His own declaration, "The words which I speak are not mine, but the Father's who sent me."

S. *And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.*—The prostration of the representatives of the church before the Lamb, was an expression of their profound reverence of Christ as their Teacher, and of their devout gratitude for his instructions. Viewed as prospective and prophetic, it showed that the true church would hold in the highest estimation, and cherish the utmost respect for, the revelation which he has given.

*Having harps*, emblematic of the offering of praise. *Golden vials full of odors*, were cups or broad dishes for the offering of incense, entirely unlike what we term vials. These are explained to be the prayers of saints. The prototype is the daily offering of incense on the golden altar, under the former dispensation, at which time the people offered prayer and thanksgiving. We have here conclusive evidence that it is the church, and its worship on earth, that is the subject of this vision. Prayer does not belong to the heavenly state. The golden censers full of incense were in the hands of the twenty-four elders and representatives of the Christian church; and as John explains these

to be symbols of *the prayers of saints*, we are surprised to find it affirmed, that this is the worship of the glorified in heaven. But we shall have further evidence of the correctness of the interpretation given above on this point as we proceed.

9. *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*—Why is this a new song? Because it commemorates the *finished* work of Christ; being thus in contrast with the songs of the ancient economy. The 96th Psalm is prophetic of the coming and reign of Messiah; and therefore it opens with the exhortation to “*sing unto the Lord a new song.*” So the first part of the 42d chap. of Isaiah is descriptive of the ministry of Christ on earth; and in view of this, the call is given, “*Sing unto the Lord a new song.*” Who were to perform this duty, and where was it to be performed? The answer is given in the clause which is subjoined, *And sing his praise from the end of the earth.*

The special subjects of that song are the worthiness of Christ to reveal to us the will of the Father, his sacrificial death, the redemption he has wrought for his people, and the consequent privileges and mercies they have obtained. The living creatures and the elders declare, that they were redeemed to God out of every people and nation, which is a positive proof that they represent the church of believers; and the extent of this work, being performed in every nation and tribe of men, shows that this is prophetic of the church to the end of time, the universality of its triumphs, and the feelings of love and gratitude which its members will ever have toward their glorious Head.

10. *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth.*—Being made kings and priests, explains what is meant by having on their heads crowns of gold, as stated in the previous chapter. As kings, the governing authority will be exercised by them ; and as priests, they will draw near to God and offer spiritual sacrifices unto Him. The commonly received Greek text requires a somewhat different translation, thus : Thou hast made *them* priests and kings, and *they* shall reign ; in which *them* and *they* are used instead of *us* and *we*. But the Greek texts of Stephens and Beza and Elzevir require the translation which we have in our Bibles, and which should be regarded as the true reading.

The declaration, *we shall reign on the earth*, proves decisively what we have repeatedly said, that the *whole* reference is to the church in this world ; and it must be seen, that the interpretation which makes these things to transpire in heaven, involves the whole in inconsistency and confusion. That declaration in the song of the church, is prophetic, and re-echoes the predictions of Daniel : “ *The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*” Dan. 7 : 18 and 27. The universality and blessedness of this reign is fully and glowingly described by John in the two closing chapters of this book. Peter says, in his general epistle to believers, “ *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal or kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.*”

11. *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders ; and*

*the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.*—We have had the ministers and members of the church represented by the living ones and the elders, and now a new class of worshipers is introduced with the name of *angels*. At the first occurrence of this word in this vision, it is important to note its signification. Beside designating an order of beings superior to ourselves, the term is used in the Old and New Testaments to signify any agent or instrumentality, good or bad, animate or inanimate, which God employs to accomplish his purposes. It is defined to be “one who performs the office of an envoy or messenger,” from a word which signifies *to lead*. In the Apocalypse it is used to designate those who succeeded the apostles in the care of the churches, denominated also stars. 1: 20; 2: 1. It is applied also to civil officers, as in chap. 9: 14, 15, where the four angels who were bound by the river Euphrates, mean the four leaders, or sultans of the Seljukian Turks, who in the tenth century crossed that river with an immense army, and overturned the Saracen dominion in western Asia. In the preceding chapter, the king of the locusts, *i.e.* the Saracens, is called *the angel* of the bottomless pit. This angel was Mahomet. So the seven angels with the vials of the last seven plagues, and others in other instances, mean human agents and instrumentalities by which God executes his judgments and performs his will.

The angel worshipers, in the case before us, I would consider to be civil rulers and officers of government, and their position in the rear of the elders, and encompassing them, as foreshowing the important fact, that civil rulers and governments would protect the church in the enjoyment of Christian privileges, join in its worship, and participate in its blessings. It is, in fact, a symbolic representation of what the ancient prophets so often and so rap-

turously foretold, that "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers;" "The Lord will arise upon thee, and his glory will be seen upon thee; and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." "The abundance of the sea shall be converted to thee, and the forces of the Gentiles shall come to thee." "Their *kings* shall minister unto thee." In the description which John gives of the last and most perfect state of the church on earth, he says: "*The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.*" The design of this introductory vision appears to be, to show what the church in this world would be; and as the worship and praise here described is that of believers in this life, it is most congruous, and most in harmony with the scope of the vision to consider the term angels as designating civil rulers and distinguished officers of government. This company of the redeemed, who render devout ascription of praise, was a vast, an innumerable multitude.

12. *Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.*—They declare that Jesus Christ, the Lamb who was slain, is worthy to receive, to have and possess, or to have ascribed to him, *the power* to reign as king, *the riches*, all that is necessary for supplying the wants of his people, *the wisdom* to guide all the affairs of the church and the world, *the strength* to uphold his friends and subdue his enemies, and the *honor*, such as is due to him, and the *glory* or renown, and the *blessing* or praise.

13. *And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and*



*glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.*—In this ascription, according to commentators, “they were joined by all the inhabitants of heaven and earth, and the souls of those who were in the separate state, whose bodies were under the earth, or in the sea, or by all creatures in the universe, with the exception of none but the determined enemies of God.” This, of course, is a literal understanding and a literal interpretation, and an assumption that these things really occurred before the eyes of the apostolic seer, all of which are erroneous. The whole is symbolic and prophetic, showing that Christ, according to the promise of the Father, and the utterances of the prophets, would, in due time, have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; that all enemies shall be put under his feet; that his name shall be praised from the rising to the setting sun—in a word, that he shall receive the homage of all mankind. Furthermore, these were visionary representations, divinely produced phantasms, not real transactions, and their fulfillment is to be in the church in this world.

Heaven is the symbol of government, and every creature, or as in the original, *every created thing*, are those who administer the government, called in a preceding verse angels. Those *on earth* are the mass of the people who are subject to the ruling authority. Those *under the earth* are those who are in a state of bondage; and those who *are in the sea* are those who inhabit the islands of the sea. Thus, the persons meant in this passage are people of all classes, rulers and subjects, bond and free. We find a similar classification in the fifteenth verse of the next chapter, thus: The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man hid them-

selves. Also, in 19 : 18. These all unite in devoutly ascribing praise, honor, glory, and power to Him who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever. The church is to advance until it has universal dominion, and the people of all nations and conditions shall know and adore Jehovah and his Christ.

This metaphorical use of the terms heaven, and earth, and sea, is common, not only in this book, but throughout the sacred scriptures. The reference is not to the material universe, but to people in different civil and social conditions. For instance, Ps. 96 : 1, *Sing unto the Lord all the earth*, meaning all the people of the land. Isa. 49 : 13, *Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth*;—civil rulers and the people were to rejoice. Isa. 65 : 16, 18, *The former troubles are forgotten ; for behold, I create new heavens and a new earth—for I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy*. The last clause is explanatory, and shows clearly that a happy change was to be made in the civil, social and religious state of the people. Things were to be made new in the government and in the church, and, of course, in the condition of those who were concerned. Jer. 22 : 29, *O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord*,—which is a call made to the people. In chapter 7 : 3, the command is given : *Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees*,—where the people of different conditions are meant. Instances of this kind are too numerous to be cited here. They will appear in the course of our exegesis.

14. *And the four beasts said, Amen*.—The four living creatures, representing Christ's ministers, gave a hearty response, expressive of their desire that so it may be. The elders prostrated themselves and *worshipped Him who liveth forever and ever*. Such is the true church, and such is its worship. Such is its love of revealed

truth—such is and ever will be its gratitude for the disclosures which Christ has made of the will and purposes of God, and such is the shadowing forth of its future triumphs and glory.

It is manifest, that Christ is joined with the Father in all these adorations of the true church. He who gave the revelation of these things has thus sanctioned such worship. He has shown us, prospectively, that the saints will thus worship forever and ever. Does, then, this book teach the practice of idolatry, or is Christ a proper object of adoration and praise?

In these sublime ascriptions it is declared, that Christ hath redeemed us to God with his blood, which is a direct affirmation of the doctrine of the atonement. The foundation of all the excellencies, privileges, and hopes of believers is, that Christ died for them, and this will furnish the chief burden of their songs, in their earthly pilgrimage and in their eternal home.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### *The Opening of the Seals.*

1. *And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.*—The contents of the book or the roll, are now to be made known. The first seal is broken; and the attention of the apostle is called to the disclosure by a voice like the noise of thunder, saying, *Come and see.* This voice was uttered by the first of the four living creatures, whose characteristics were those of a lion, showing perhaps, that the preachers of the gospel in

the first period of Christianity, designated by this seal, were very powerful, bold, and magnanimous.

2. *And I saw, and behold a white horse ; and he that sat on him had a bow ; and a crown was given unto him : and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.*—The opening of the first roll disclosed a white horse, with a rider having a bow, and a crown was given to him. His appearance was that of a conqueror, achieving conquest after conquest. As I understand it, this emblem was drawn on the inside of the roll, and was all that was exhibited on the opening of it. No writing was seen,—the emblem contained in itself the whole prediction intended to be expressed. What this was, is the thing to be ascertained. Similar emblems were shown in a vision to Zechariah, and describe events which preceded the incarnation of Christ. There were four chariots ; the first was drawn by red horses, the second by black horses, the third by white, the fourth by grizzled and bay horses. Zech. 6 : 1, 3. The white horse is the emblem of a bloodless joyous victory, 19 : 11, 14. The rider is Christ, or emblematically Christianity itself. A bow is an instrument used for shooting arrows, and these together were chief implements of ancient warfare. The meaning is that the victories of Christianity are won by the instrumentality of truth, the arrow which pierces the heart, as on the day of Pentecost when multitudes were pricked in their hearts, and exclaimed, What shall we do?—A crown given to the rider, signifies, that Christ, or Christianity would be victorious and have ruling authority. This is explained, as is usual with John, in an additional clause. *He went forth conquering and to conquer.* Many were to be the conflicts—certain and joyous the victories. Through the labors of the apostles and their coadjutors, the Christian religion spread over a large portion of the known world, so that, as Paul

said, "the gospel was preached in all the world." The period of this seal may be considered as extending from the day of Pentecost to about the year 67 or 68, when the "wars and rumors of wars" began which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem.

3 and 4. *And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.*—At the opening of the second seal, the second living creature, whose appearance was that of a young ox, indicating, perhaps, that at this period the faith and patience of ministers would be greatly tried, gave the same call to attention. The emblem disclosed was a *red horse*, by which is signified a time of war and bloodshed in an eminent degree. This is shown to be its meaning by what follows. *Power was given to the rider to take peace from the land, and that they should kill one another, and there was given to him a great sword.* These expressions and this symbolic act, predict uncommon slaughter. This seal had its fulfillment in the incessant civil wars in the short reigns of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, and *especially in the destruction of Jerusalem, and of more than a million of the Jews.* This capture of the holy city, and immense sacrifice of human life, was attended with the demolition of the temple, and the overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth. In the language of the Saviour, it was such a time of tribulation, as never had been, and never should be again. In addition to these, were the wars of Domitian in repelling the invasions of the surrounding barbarous nations, and the formidable insurrection in Germany. This was a period, which fully justified the expression, that *men should kill*

one another, and gave a terrible illustration of the emblems employed. Domitian was slain in the year 96, and this may be considered as the termination of this seal.

5 and 6. *And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.*—The third seal introduced a different state of things; and the third living creature which had a face like a man, indicating perhaps, that intelligence and wisdom would characterize this period, said, *Come and see.* A black horse is emblematic of calamities and mourning. The rider with balances signifies, that the ruling power would be marked with justice and equity. Seemingly contradictory as is the import of these symbols, we find, that the history of the time fully sustains their appropriateness.

Nerva, who succeeded Domitian, was a prince of great moderation and generosity. Goldsmith informs us, that “the people, being accustomed to tyranny, regarded his gentle reign with rapture.” It was, however, very brief. Trajan succeeded to the throne and was distinguished for his diligence, his moderation to his enemies, his modest bearing, his liberality to the deserving, and economy in his expenses.” He was induced, however, to look with suspicion upon Christians, and great numbers of them were put to death. These cruelties were suspended by order of the emperor, when he was informed by Pliny of the innocence and harmlessness of their lives.

After his death Adrian was elected emperor in A.D. 117. He was distinguished for personal and mental accomplishments, and equally so, for his moral virtues.

“He was affable to his friends, and gentle toward those of inferior stations; he relieved their wants, and visited them in sickness, it being his constant maxim, that he was an emperor, not elected for his own good, but for the benefit of mankind.” Yet with these virtues there was a strange mingling of vices.

He made a tour through France, Germany, and Holland, to Great Britain, and thence through Spain to Rome, “reforming many abuses, and doing much for the public welfare.” He traveled through the eastern part of the empire, and mitigated the severity of the persecution of the Christians. He went twice into Africa, corrected disorders, reformed the governments there, erected magnificent edifices, and ordered the rebuilding of Carthage and Jerusalem. “He forbade masters to kill their slaves, as had been before allowed; but ordained that they should be tried by laws enacted against capital offenses.” All these things show the truthfulness of the emblem of the balances in the hand of the imperial rider.

Equally true to fact is the emblem of the black horse on which he rode. For when Adrian was in Athens, another insurrection was made by the Jews, who massacred Romans and Christians throughout Judea. A powerful army was sent to subdue them, and in the course of two years more than a thousand of their best towns were destroyed, and nearly six hundred thousand men were slain in battle. Adrian reigned about twenty-two years.

Antoninus succeeded him in the year 138. His morals were so correct, he was surnamed the Pius. His reign for a period of nearly twenty-three years, was distinguished for the encouragement of learning, and efforts for the welfare and happiness of the people. Some earthquakes having occurred, the Christians were accused by their inveterate enemies, the heathen, of being the cause of those calamities,

and were subjected to injurious and cruel treatment accordingly. Mosheim states, that "the emperor, being informed of these unjust and barbarous proceedings, addressed an edict to the whole province of Asia, in which he denounced capital punishment against such as should accuse the Christians without being able to prove them guilty of any crime." Thus, in this reign was the emblem of the balances verified. I cannot agree with those writers who make that emblem to signify a yoke of oppression, or of burdensome ordinances, and superstitious observances. Such fancies are unworthy of the subject.

The other part of this seal seems to refer to events relating more particularly to the church. *A measure of wheat for a penny*, &c. Wheat and barley being chief articles of food, are emblems of Christian privileges which nourish piety in the soul. Being carefully measured out for a definite sum indicates, that there would be a great diminution of these privileges, and the enjoyment of them would be attended with great difficulties. *The wine and the oil* signify spiritual comforts and refreshings which result from those privileges; and the command not to hurt these, is prophetic of the protection which the emperors endeavored to extend to the Christians, assailed and maltreated by their enemies.

Trajan, whose reign is included under this seal, issued an edict to this effect, "That the Christians were not to be officiously sought after, but that such *as were accused and convicted of an adherence to Christianity*, were to be put to death as wicked citizens, if they did not return to the religion of their ancestors." This made an adherence to Christianity a capital crime. The only alternative for the accused was apostasy or death. None, therefore, could be known openly as Christians, and as a consequence, public worship could not be enjoyed without incurring the peril



of death. It became indispensable then for Christians to conceal their sentiments and to give up in a great measure their privileges. This, in my view, is what is signified by the careful measuring of the wheat and barley.

On a representation being made to Adrian by Granianus, pro-consul of Asia, of the cruelty and injustice of allowing a lawless rable to sacrifice persons accused of no crime, that emperor prohibited the putting of Christians to death without a regular conviction of crimes against the civil laws.

Another fact illustrative of the text was, that under the reign of Trajan there was a great revival of learning, which had languished under the tyrannical reigns of his predecessors. Protected and encouraged by that worthy prince, philosophy and letters advanced to a degree of eminence nearly equal to that of former times. It was at this period, that the famous apologies and vindications of Christians and Christianity, were published by Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tatian, and others. Thus the prophetic injunction not to injure the wine and the oil, probably received its fulfillment in these favoring circumstances. These, however, were preceded, and intermingled with circumstances of a very different nature, as the other emblems of this seal indicate. The time of this seal may be considered as extending to the death of Antoninus Pius, which occurred in A.D. 161.

*The Fourth Seal, verses 7 and 8. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse ; and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him ; and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.—The fourth*

of the living creatures was like an eagle with his wings extended, as if in the act of flying.

The emblem is a pale horse, whose rider is death, with hell following. Its meaning is, that there will be great destruction of human life, by war, pestilence, famine, and the rapid invasions of barbarous nations. This interpretation is subjoined by the revelator. Power was given to them over a fourth part of the earth, that is, the Roman empire, *to kill with the sword, i. e. war, with hunger, i. e. famine, with death, i. e. pestilence, and with beasts, i. e. barbarians.*

In A.D. 161, Marcus Aurelius succeeded to the imperial throne, and though distinguished for his literary accomplishments, he was hostile to Christians. He associated with him in the government, Licius Verus, a man passionate and vile. Goldsmith states, that immediately "the Catti invaded Germany and Rhetia, ravaging all with fire and sword." The Rhetians revolted, but were subdued. The Parthians, under Vologeses their king, made a terrible invasion, destroyed the Roman legions in Armenia, entered Syria, and filled the whole country with terror. The Romans were victorious over the Parthians, took Selucia, plundered and burned Babylon and Ctesiphon. On their return more than half their army was wasted by famine and pestilence. Not only so, but the army brought the pestilence to Rome, and spread it in the provinces through which it passed. Its ravages in the western portion of the empire were indeed terrible. In the language of Goldsmith, there were "earthquakes, famines, and inundations, such as had never before happened; the products of the earth, throughout all Italy, were devoured by locusts; all the barbarous nations surrounding the empire made their irruptions even into Italy itself." To crown the whole, these calamities were ascribed to

the Christians, and a merciless persecution was waged against them, and vast numbers were put to death, among whom were those distinguished ministers, Justin Martyr, and Polycarp. These calamities fell chiefly on the western quarter of the empire, designated by *the fourth part of the earth*. After a short interval the northern barbarians renewed the war of invasion, and were again overcome and driven back. This state of warfare and commotion, joined with the infernal hatred, persecution, and massacre of Christians, is doubtless what is meant by the phrase, *hell followed with death*. We should think, that there could be no doubt whether these events should be referred to this seal. In addition to these, and foreshown by the same emblems, was the terrible state of things under the short reigns of Commodus, Pertinax, Didius, Severus, Caracalla, Macrinus, Heliogabalus, Alexander, Maximin, Pupienus, and Balbinus, and Philip, all of whom, except Severus, were assassinated, some of whom reigned only a few months, and the entire period of all their tyrannical and disastrous reigns being only eighty-six years. This seal may be considered as extending to the year 248 when Philip was slain.

*The Fifth Seal*, verses 9, 10, 11. *And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*—This roll disclosed the picture of an altar, at the base of which were

lying the persons of those who were slain for their adherence to the word of God, and the faithful testimony which they bore to his truth. Reference to a concordance will show at once, that the term *souls*, is used throughout the Bible for persons. Though they are represented as *slain*, they inquire with great earnestness how long judgment and retribution will be delayed against their murderers? This emblem foretells a period of great persecution and slaughter of Christians. Let us see if history furnishes the record of its fulfillment.

Mosheim, (Cent. 3, chap. 2,) says: "The accession of Decius Trajan to the imperial throne, in the year 249, raised a new tempest, in which the fury of persecution fell in a dreadful manner on the church of Christ. For this emperor published most terrible and cruel edicts, by which the prætors were ordered, upon pain of death, either to extirpate the whole body of Christians without exception, or to force them, by torments of various kinds, to return to Pagan worship. Hence, in all the provinces of the empire, multitudes of Christians were during the space of two years put to death, by the most horrid punishments which an ingenious barbarity could invent."

Under Gallus and Volusianus his son, the flame of persecution which had somewhat subsided, was reanimated. Besides suffering in common with others, the calamities of a terrible pestilence, they were subjected to the renewed rage of persecution, by the heathen priests persuading the people that the pestilence was sent by the gods on account of the lenity shown to the Christians.

"Valerian was made emperor in A.D. 254, and caused the persecution to cease; but soon Macrianus, his chief counselor, and a bigoted pagan, prevailed on the emperor to prohibit the assemblages of the Christians, and to banish their bishops and doctors. This edict, published in 257,

was followed by one still more severe, in consequence of which, Christians in all the provinces were put to death by most terrible methods of execution." His son and successor in the year 260, restored peace to the church, which continued in a tolerable degree through the succeeding short reigns of Flavius Claudius, Aurelian, and Tacitus.

But in the reign of Diocletian which began in 284, in partnership with three others, viz., Maximian Hercules, Constantius Chlorus, and Maximinus Galerius, the scene changed. Galerius importunately solicited Diocletian for an edict against Christians, and "an order was obtained for him to pull down their churches, to burn their books and writings, and to take from them all civil rights and privileges." A fire broke out in the palace of Nicomedia, which was attributed to Christians, and Diocletian "caused vast numbers of them to be tormented in a most inhuman manner." Certain seditions in Armenia and Syria were charged on them, and Diocletian issued a second edict, ordering all pastors and ministers to be cast into prison. 'A third edict was soon issued by him, ordering all sorts of torments to be employed, to force those venerable captives to renounce their profession, by sacrificing to the gods. An immense number of persons illustrious for their piety and learning became victims throughout the empire, excepting France, which was under the mild and equitable reign of Constantius Chlorus. Some were punished in a manner too shameful to relate, some were put to death after having their constancy tried by tedious and inexpressible tortures, and some were sent to the mines to drag out the remainder of life in poverty and bondage.'\*

'In the second year of this horrible persecution (A.D. 304) a fourth edict was published by Diocletian, at the instigation of Galerius and others, by which the magistrates

\*Mosheim, cent. 4, part 1, chap. 1.

were ordered and commissioned to force all Christians, without distinction of rank or sex, to sacrifice to the gods, and were authorised to employ all sorts of torments to drive them to this act of apostasy. The diligence and zeal of the Roman magistrates in the execution of this inhuman edict, had like to have proved fatal to the Christian cause.' Galerius finally obliged Diocletian and Maximian to resign the imperial dignity, and proclaimed himself emperor of the east, leaving the west to Constantius. Having done this, "he augmented the sufferings of Christians under his tyrannic rule to a dreadful degree." How appropriate to these bloody scenes was the emblem of human bodies strown round an altar, slain for the word of God.

To these martyrs *white robes were given* as a token of their innocence and their future recompense; and for their consolation they were told that yet a little season and they should rest when others of their brethren should be slain as they had been. This, I regard as an answer to their question, *How long, O Lord*, in the preceding verse; and, if I mistake not, the idea is, that in a short time, these persecutions from heathen rulers, heathen priests and magistrates would cease, which was the fact in a few years after, under Constantine, the first Christian emperor. As we shall presently see, he not only caused persecution against the Christians to cease; but he put down heathen priests and idolatrous sacrifices, and prohibited the whole system of paganism. There was a long period of comparative tranquillity and prosperity to the church; vast accessions were made to it all over the empire, and its supremacy was everywhere acknowledged.

12, 13, and 14. *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun*

*became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind: and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.*—The convulsions of the earth, the obscuration of the sun, the sanguinary aspect of the moon, the falling of stars, the passing away of the firmament, and the removal of mountains and islands, are great prodigies in nature, employed as symbols to express violent changes in the civil and religious affairs of a kingdom or state. Here, and in succeeding chapters, the things predicted were to transpire within the Roman empire, which, at the time of these visions, embraced nearly all the known world.

An *earthquake* is a symbol of a civil commotion and revolution; or, as Cruden says, “An extraordinary and unexpected alteration in the state of affairs, civil or ecclesiastical.” The *sun* being a ruling orb in the natural world, is the symbol of the ruling power in the state or the church. Being deprived of its brightness, and made black as sackcloth, signifies the cessation of that power—the overthrow of the ruling authority. The *moon* is an emblem of inferior official stations, and sometimes of religious ordinances. Its becoming like blood, signifies that the things represented by it are to undergo a sanguinary change. *Stars* represent distinguished persons, Christian pastors and teachers, as in chapter 1 : 20; and in this place, heathen philosophers, statesmen and priests. The falling of these, means their deposition from office, the termination of their functions, and the ruin of their influence. *Heaven* is the symbol of government, either civil or religious, under a particular form; and its departure means the cessation of that form, a change in the political system. *Mountains and islands* are states and sovereignties included

within an empire; and their removal out of their places indicates a transition from one political and moral condition to another. It is important that these definitions should be particularly noticed, because these emblems frequently occur in the subsequent visions. The manner in which they are used in the Old Testament, fully substantiates the interpretation now given of them.

The overthrow of the Chaldean government, the capture of Babylon by the army of Darius, and the slaying of the king and nobles, is thus described in the 13th chapter of Isaiah: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he will destroy the sinners out of it. For the stars of heaven and its constellations shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts." Ezekiel, in chap. 32 : 7, 8, describes the destruction of Egypt in a similar manner, expressly comparing the extinction of her glory to the extinguishment of the lights of heaven: "When I shall extinguish thee, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord." In the hieroglyphics of that country, the sun is always the emblem of the king. (See also Jer. 4 : 22, 24.) In the same metaphorical language Christ foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Jewish commonwealth. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and



then shall all the tribes of the land mourn," &c. It was declared by the patriarch Jacob, in his prophetic blessing of Judah, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver between his feet, *until Shiloh shall come*. At the destruction of Jerusalem, the sceptre did depart, the Jewish commonwealth was overthrown; and this was *the sign* that Messiah had come. This *sign* appeared in *heaven*; the Saviour using that term just as the old prophets did, and as John afterward did, as signifying the government, both civil and ecclesiastical; which government was then utterly destroyed. The passing away of the heaven of government, was the infallible *sign* that Messiah had come.

Having thus explained the symbols, let us turn to the records of history for the fulfillment in the case before us. The victories of Constantine; the entire subversion of the Pagan dominion in the empire, which had continued for more than a thousand years; the eradication of heathenism, and the establishment of Christianity and a Christian government, are the events thus predicted.

At the beginning of the fourth century, the Roman empire consisted of four great divisions, each having a governor or emperor over it. Galerius and Dioclesian ruled over the central and eastern portions. Upon the death of Galerius, his son-in-law, Maxentius, a firm supporter of paganism, became a competitor for the imperial throne. Constantine succeeded his father in the government of the western portion of the empire. Ascertaining the state of things, he left France, and entered Italy with an army of 90,000 foot and 8,000 horse, and advanced almost to the gates of Rome. Maxentius came out with an army of 175,000 foot and 1,800 horse. The engagement was fierce and bloody, till the pagan usurper's cavalry was routed, and Maxentius was drowned in his flight by the breaking down

of a bridge, which precipitated him into the Tiber. This victory was achieved in the year 312.

Edicts were soon after issued by Constantine, declaring that Christians should be relieved of all their oppressions, and be admitted into places of civil trust and authority.

Maximin, who governed the eastern part of the empire, desirous of obtaining the whole imperial authority, with a powerful army, marched against Licinius, who participated with Constantine in the government; but, after many engagements, was defeated, and his troops cut to pieces. Licinius then turned against Constantine, and with Maximin, at the head of formidable armies, fought a desperate battle in Pannonia. Before engaging, Constantine, with his Christian ministers, implored divine assistance; and Licinius called upon the heathen priests to beg assistance of the gods. Here the friends of Christianity and the abettors of heathenism were arrayed against each other. The issue of that battle was of the highest moment. Constantine was victorious, and Licinius sued for a truce. Soon, however, instigated by the heathen priests, he raised another army of those who were attached to the heathen superstitions; and, having fought several battles without success, he threw himself at the feet of the Christian victor a prisoner of war, in the year 325.

The imperial authority being wholly in the hands of Constantine, he resolved to establish Christianity on a basis which no revolution could shake. He commanded, that in all the empire the orders of the bishops should everywhere be obeyed. "He employed all the resources of his genius, all the authority of laws, and all the engaging charms of his munificence and liberality, to efface the superstitions of paganism, and to propagate Christianity in every corner of the Roman empire. He had learned, no doubt, from the disturbances continually excited by Lici-

nus, that neither himself nor the empire could enjoy a fixed state of tranquillity and safety so long as the ancient superstitions subsisted; and therefore, from this period, he openly opposed the sacred rites of paganism, as a religion detrimental to the interests of the state."\* As islands and mountains are emblems of states and small kingdoms, the removal of these from their places signifies a change in their government, or civil position in relation to the empire. This was done in part by the formation of the four præfectures, and in part by the abolition of heathen laws and forms of government. Says Mosheim, "Constantine the Great, in order to prevent civil commotions, and to fix his authority upon solid and stable foundations, made several changes, not only in the laws of the empire, but also in the form of the Roman government." Other changes were made by the Christian emperors who succeeded him in this century, particularly by Theodosius the Great, who died A.D. 395. Thus was there a mighty revolution, which, like a great earthquake, broke up the ancient foundations of heathenism, and changed the whole aspect of things. The sun of that long-established system of superstition and idolatry was shrouded with blackness; its deceptive and degrading rites, after many bloody struggles, were abolished; the priests, officers and eminent men, who were stars in the pagan firmament, were deposed and cast aside, and its temples either demolished or used for Christian worship.

15, 16, and 17. *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves*

\* Mosheim, Cent. 4, page 1, chapter 1; also, Goldsmith's *His. Rom. Em.*

*in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains ; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for the great day of his wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand ?*—The effects of these changes on the enemies of Christianity are depicted in strong language in these verses. Men of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, are represented as hiding themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, and beseeching that these may be a cover to them from the exhibitions of Divine power and wrath. Most deeply did they realize that the day of His terrible anger was come. To understand the full force of this, we must look to the facts which were the fulfillment of it. We have seen how the pagan portion of the people in the states and provinces of the empire, excited by the priests to oppose the progress of Christianity, and led on by Maximin and Licinius, made desperate struggles to maintain heathenism, and were defeated in successive battles, with great slaughter, though their force was far the greatest. Universal consternation filled the hearts of these enemies of the Christian religion. Seeing the success of that cause which they had opposed with unmitigated hate, and knowing what horrid barbarities they had practiced on the Christians, putting them to death wherever they could, though guilty of no crime, they feared the worst consequences in regard to themselves. They were sensible that the Christians' God had arisen to vindicate his cause, and to avenge the blood of his martyred people. They sought protection from the anger of Him against whom resistance was vain. It was the deep conviction of their souls, that *the great day of his wrath*, in which he would inflict a righteous retribution, had arrived, and none would be able to stand against it. Knowing what they did of the triumphs of Christianity in the three

hundred years of its existence ; seeing it ascend the throne of the empire, and perceiving that it would become predominant, it was natural that they should be filled with alarm, and with overwhelming convictions of guilt.

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## CHAPTER VII.

THE events detailed in this chapter are included under the sixth seal. In connection with the overthrow of heathenism, and the suppression of its worship and sacrifices by Constantine, converts to Christianity became very numerous, and the church had a season of great prosperity. The prediction of this constitutes the subject of this chapter.

Verse 1. *And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on any tree.*—After a discomfiture of the advocates of paganism, a different scene was presented to the mind of the Christian seer. Angels are any agents or instrumentalities which God employs to effect his purposes. By the *four angels*, mentioned here, I understand the four præfects which Constantine appointed and placed over the four great divisions of the empire, to regulate and control everything agreeably to his instructions. The earth, or as it should be read, *the land*, is the Roman empire, and the four corners are the four præfectures into which it was divided by Constantine. The four angels standing on the four corners, holding the winds, &c., are the præfects acting in their several stations for the suppression of injurious excitements, insurrections, and tumults among all classes of the people, and the preservation of order and peace. The ful-

fillment was exact, for Constantine exerted all his authority, and took much care to prevent the tumults which the heathen priests and their adherents endeavored to make in their hostility to Christianity. He made assiduous efforts to secure to all parts of that vast empire the enjoyment of tranquillity and of religious privileges.

2. *And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea.*—The angel advancing from the east was also a symbolic angel, which signifies the ministry of the gospel, or those who perform it. The seal of the living God is the word and the ordinances made effectual by the Holy Spirit. The powerful preaching of the truth is the loud voice of the angel, and the immediate effect of this was to restrain men from sedition and violence—to repress those evil passions which do great hurt to the high and the low. Let there be peace and tranquillity in the empire, that the work of conversion may go on, and the servants of God may be sealed and become established in knowledge and grace. I understand the former verse as a prophecy, that at this period the civil authority should be exerted to preserve general peace; and this second verse a prophecy, that the ministry, or ecclesiastical authority, should do the same. The fact was, that vast numbers embraced Christianity, professed themselves believers, and were baptized during this period of tranquillity under Constantine. The pastors and spiritual teachers manifested “indefatigable zeal;” translations were made of the Holy Scriptures, and Christians were eminent for their piety. All this obtained for religion a strong and extensive influence, and powerful friends.

3. *Saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the*

*trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*—By the earth, the sea, and the trees, are meant the people who occupy the country, and those who inhabit the islands, and persons of all ages and classes. *Trees*, see Ps. 1 : 3 . Matt. 3 : 10. Isa. 61 : 3.

4.—8. *And I heard the number of them which were sealed, &c. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand, &c.*—These verses may refer to the conversion of Jews, a definite number being used for an indefinite. Being sealed with the truth and with Christian ordinances shows what is the thing meant.

9 and 10. *After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*—Another part of this great ingathering to the church, in this tranquil period, consisted of the Gentiles in all the kingdoms and provinces of the empire. They stood before the throne, previously spoken of, and before the Lamb, as enjoying the protection and favor of the government and of Christ, clothed in white robes, showing that they were forgiven and sanctified, and with palms in their hands, indicating that their cause had become triumphant. With hearty earnestness they ascribe their salvation from their enemies and persecutors to their God and Redeemer. The article has been improperly omitted by the translators, and should be supplied so as to read, *The salvation*; and then the sentence is elliptical, which, being filled up so as to express the idea, would be, *The*

salvation be ascribed to our God, &c.—salvation from heathen rule, oppression and persecution.

11 and 12. *And all the angels stood round about the throne, &c. Saying, Amen ; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.*—The officers of government, the ministers of the gospel, and the whole church reverently adored God, saying, Amen ; so let it be. The praise, and the glory, &c. of the church be ascribed to God, forever and ever. All that the church has of wisdom, honor, fame, power, and strength, and all its devout praise, be attributed and rendered to Him who is the author of it all.

13 and 14. *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*—John is asked by one of the elders, apparently for the purpose of directing his attention to the matter, who those converted persons were who uttered the foregoing ascription of praise, and whence had they come ? The questioner gave the answer, that they were those who had passed through great tribulation, and had acquired their moral purity in consequence of the blood of Christ. By his mediation and atonement the means of salvation are bestowed, and the Spirit is sent to renovate and sanctify. Thus are their characters made pure through the blood of the Lamb.

15. *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple : and he that sitteth*



*on the throne shall dwell among them.*—Because their sins have been forgiven, and they have been thus purified, and have borne well their trials, they are before the seat of Divine sovereignty as accepted worshipers, and have the honor to serve Him in his church, which is his spiritual temple. Another of their privileges is, that he, according to his promise by the ancient prophets, will dwell with them, will favor them with his gracious presence, his protection and care. These are the greatest blessings which his people enjoy this side of heaven.

16. *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.*—This has usually been interpreted to mean the happy condition of saints in heaven. Scott says, “Nothing on earth can fully answer to such language as this.” But, it should be remembered, that this whole chapter refers to the period of the sixth seal, and predicts events to transpire in that period. The exemption from hunger, thirst, and burning heat, is here, as in other passages, symbolic. It is as if it had been said, The days of heathen domination and persecution, in which it was a capital crime for any to be Christians and practice Christian rites, are ended. Now, they will hunger and thirst no more, because they will no more be deprived of the bread and water of life by heathen persecutors. Christian privileges shall now be securely enjoyed ; Christian assemblies may now be held without molestation, and ministers may labor for the good of their flocks without being subjected to torture, imprisonment, banishment, and death. The sanctuaries of the Lord shall not be demolished as they have been by the ruthless hands of the violent, but shall be the places where the hungry shall be fed. That the whole is figurative, and that the reference is to believers in those times of religious quiet-

ness and prosperity, may be inferred from what follows in this and the succeeding verse.

Language similar to that used in this verse, we find in Isa. 49 : 9, 10. "They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them ; for He who hath mercy upon them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." This is a prophecy of the bestowment of blessings on the Jews under the reign of Messiah. Its import is, that they shall be favored with great spiritual mercies, and be exempt from oppression and persecution. So, in the verse before us it is declared, that there shall be an exemption from injustice and tyrannical oppression, and the peaceful enjoyment of Christian privileges.

17. *For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*—At this period Christ will occupy the seat of civil and ecclesiastical power in the person of a Christian Emperor, and will feed his people with knowledge, and open to them fountains of spiritual refreshing, and incline them to repair to them, expressed by leading them. And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes : *i.e.*, the afflictions and sorrows of former times shall not be renewed in this period. History certifies the fulfillment : For when Julian, the apostate, at the close of the fourth century, and about forty-three years after the death of Constantine, attempted to restore the ancient heathen religion, with all its accompanying horrors of persecution, he was killed in a war with the Persians before he could effect his abominable purpose. Five emperors, all favorable to Christianity, succeeded him.

Mosheim informs us, that Constantine and his successors established schools as well as churches, “and left no means unemployed to excite and maintain a spirit of literary emulation among the professors of Christianity. For this purpose schools were established in many cities. Libraries were also erected, and men of learning and genius were nobly recompensed by the honors and advantages attached to the culture of the sciences and arts.” *Cent. 4. p. 2 : c. 1.* The clergy were no longer, as they had been, profoundly ignorant, when these means of acquiring knowledge were afforded. The people, as in all similar cases, reaped the benefit. They were instructed, enlightened, refreshed. Thus did the Lamb, who was in the midst of the throne of government, feed his people, and lead them to living fountains of waters ; and thus did God wipe away their tears, by relieving them from those bitter afflictions to which they had been subject, and by making their religious condition comfortable and happy.

Constantine died in A.D. 337.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Seven Trumpets.*

THE seventh seal introduces the seven trumpets, which are a new set of symbols used for foreshowing another series of events. At the opening of this seal there was presented to the mind of John a scene of symbolic action like a pantomime, the place of this visionary exhibition being the court of the temple at Jerusalem.

1. *And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*—The si-

lence in heaven for a short time is that state of quietness and peace which the church enjoyed for about thirteen years after Constantine had put down civil insurrections and made Christianity the religion of the empire.

2. *And I saw the seven angels which stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.*—The angels in this instance may be regarded merely as actors to carry on the scenic representation, whose part was to sound the trumpets, *i.e.*, announce the series of events predicted.

3 and 4. *And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne, &c.*—The golden altar was in the holy place in front of the holy of holies, and was used for the offering of incense. The angel with a golden censer personated a Jewish priest in the act of officiating, and his offering of much incense indicates that the prayers and praises of the very numerous believers, were abundant and acceptable. The allusion is, to the offering of the evening sacrifice, when the priest went into the sanctuary with his censer of incense, and the people stood without engaged in silent devotion.

5. *And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth ; and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake.*—The angel returned to the brazen altar of burnt sacrifice, filled his censer with fire from it, and cast it to the ground, which was a symbolic act, signifying, as it seems to me, that there would be a great depreciation and declension in the spirit of prayer, so that it would not be fit to offer to an holy God. The great external prosperity of

the church,—its increase in numbers, influence, and wealth, had a most injurious effect on its spirituality and the purity of its worship at this time. Mosheim states, that “an enormous train of different superstitions were gradually substituted in the place of true religion and genuine piety.” ‘The pagan rites began to be imitated and blended with Christian worship,—ministers and people became pleased with religious ostentation and show;—pilgrimages were made to Palestine, and the tombs of martyrs;—vast quantities of dust and earth were brought from places held sacred, and sold at enormous prices;—public processions and supplications like those of the pagans were conducted with great pomp;—water consecrated by prayer was used; and the worship of martyrs, in imitation of that offered to heathen gods, came into practice.’ In a word, the glory of the church began to be obscured by odious superstitions; and that enormous corruption of Christianity which resulted in the papal hierarchy commenced openly its destructive work.

Observe what followed. *There were voices, &c.* Voices signify imperial edicts and proclamations, and also opposing counsels and distracting influences in the government. Thunderings and lightnings signify wars and tumults; and an earthquake, a civil revolution.

Now for the fulfillment. Constantine, a little previous to his death, divided the empire among his three sons, so that Constantine II. had Britain, France, and Spain, and what else belonged to the western provinces. Constantius had Egypt and Asia; and Constans, the youngest, had Italy, Illyricum and Africa. A war soon broke out between the eldest and the youngest of these brothers, in which the former lost his life. Constans took possession of all his brother's part, and thus became emperor of all the western provinces. Constans was soon assassinated by one of his officers, and the

whole empire came under the government of Constantius in the year 353. The dissensions, tumults, wars, and change in the government were the voices, thanderings, &c. Constantius reigned thirty-eight years.

6 and 7. *And the seven angels, which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*—The first trumpet may be considered as beginning the fall of the Roman empire. Hail and fire are each in its way destructive to all vegetation. These mingled with blood, show that the calamity was to fall on men. The earth means the empire upon which the hail and the fire were to fall. Trees are emblems of men of distinction, and grass of the common people. The third part of these refers, as I think, to a third part of the empire as it had been divided by Constantine. Being burnt up signifies, that the desolating calamity would spread devastation among them like hailstones and fire among the trees and productions of the earth.

Now, what does history disclose concerning this period? Barbarous hordes of Goths, under Alarie their king, came down from the north, with resistless power, and in numbers like hail into the western part of the empire. They ravaged and took possession as they went. The empire was so enervated by luxury and vice, that no effectual resistance was made to their destructive progress, and in a few years they had France, Spain, and Italy in their power.

8 and 9. *And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood: And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life,*

*died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.*—A mountain is the emblem of a nation or kingdom. Dan. 2 : 44, 45. Burning with fire signifies, that it had within itself the elements for great devastation. A sea represents a nation in a state of commotion, or parts of the empire which are almost surrounded with the sea, as Spain and Italy. By a third part of the sea being turned into blood, it is shown, that in a third part of the empire, there would be a sanguinary change in its affairs; and by the dying of a third part of the creatures in the sea, is meant the extinction of the political life of that portion of the empire as it had existed; and by the destruction of the ships is signified the ruin of commercial interests.

Alaric at his first invasion was induced to retire from his siege of Rome, by a donation to him of an immense treasure. But, soon afterward he returned with his army, ravaged the country, besieged the city and took it. "The soldiers had permission to pillage all places except the Christian churches. This dreadful devastation continued three days, and most valuable monuments of art and learning, sunk under the fury of the conquerors." This was in the year 410.

Not long after, Genseric, king of the Vandals, with an army of 300,000 men entered Italy, and spent fourteen days in plundering Rome. He spared neither private nor public buildings,—neither sex, nor age, nor religion were any protection from the lust and avarice of his merciless soldiers. The Huns also, with Attila at their head, ravaged Italy and other provinces about the same time. This burning mountain settled down into the maritime portions of the empire, symbolized by the sea;—the Goths and Burgundians in France, the Alani, Suevi, and Vandals in Spain, the Goths also in Italy, and the Huns in Pannonia.

10 and 11. *And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*—As the former trumpet refers to the civil affairs of the empire, this appears to refer to the religious affairs. A star denotes a ruler or a religious teacher. Ch. 1 : 14, 20. A *great star* denotes a person or succession of persons in the same office, of high distinction. Its falling from heaven indicates that the individual was in the church and had embraced some great error in doctrine. Burning as a lamp, or rather as a torch, or meteor, shows that it was alarming and baleful in its effects.

Rivers and fountains represent the sources of knowledge, of comfort, and spiritual refreshing, or the means of producing and sustaining these, such as schools and Christian institutions. The third part of these designates a particular portion of the empire. The star was called wormwood to show its effects in poisoning and embittering the rivers and fountains on which it fell, essentially changing its qualities. As a consequence *many men* died by means of those waters. Death may be political, moral, or influential, and in this figurative sense, it is used in this book. Many sunk from the standing they held in the church and the state, and were lost as to the good they might have done.

I disagree with Fleming, who says, that this “trumpet doth plainly represent the destruction of the western empire by a star falling from heaven.” For neither in this book, nor elsewhere in prophetic writings, is a star used as an emblem of a kingdom or nation; but it is used to signify a prince, a leader, a minister, or an eminent man.



Thus, in chap. 9 : 1. Dan. 8 : 10. Matt. 24 : 29. Rev. 1 : 20.

Any one who reads the history of the fourth, and the first half of the fifth century in reference to the effects produced by the Arian controversy, need be in no doubt in concluding that Arius was this "great star." As dissensions and commotions of a most serious nature were spreading through the empire in reference to his sentiments, Constantine assembled the famous council of Nice for the settlement of the points in this controversy. That council condemned the sentiments of Arius, and he was banished. Not long afterward he was recalled by Constantine ; but this did not mitigate the bitterness of the contention. Succeeding emperors espoused this religious warfare, some on one side and some on the other, and the empire for a long period presented a scene of tumult and violence. "Council was assembled against council, and their jarring and contradictory decrees spread perplexity and confusion through the Christian world." Finally, about the beginning of the fifth century, Theodosius, the great, "raised the secular arm against the Arians in a terrible manner,—drove them from their churches, enacted laws, whose severity exposed them to the greatest calamities, and made the decrees of the council of Nice triumphant over all opposition."

All this was but a part of the trouble. Mosheim informs us, that "the Arians, oppressed and persecuted by the imperial edicts, took refuge among those fierce and savage nations, who were gradually overturning the western empire." So situated, they treated the orthodox with great severity. Both Alaric, king of the Goths, and Genseric, king of the Vandals, "were bigoted Arians." That portion of the Vandals who overran the African provinces, and reigned there, were peculiar for their injustice and barbarities to the orthodox Christians. Genseric and his son, Huneric,

“pulled down the churches of those Christians who acknowledged the divinity of Christ, sent their bishops into exile, and maimed and tormented in various ways, such as were nobly firm and inflexible in the profession of their faith.” This very brief statement will suffice to show, that the period of the third trumpet was of great importance, and deserved a special notice in the prophecy “of things to come,” and that the symbols employed were highly appropriate.

12. *And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.*—This trumpet does unquestionably fore-show the overthrow of the western portion of the Roman empire. The preceding trumpets announced calamitous events, all tending to this result. In a former chapter, the sun becoming black as sackcloth of hair, was interpreted to mean the extinction of the pagan dominion over the empire. The moon becoming as blood, was the sanguinary extirpation of the idolatrous rites of paganism; and the fall of the stars, was the casting down from office and influence the pagan magistrates, priests and distinguished men.

Adhering to the same rule of interpretation, we find that the darkening of one-third part of these luminaries, means, that in the same portion of the empire, the government will be overthrown, the influence of religious ordinances will be diminished, and men of distinction will be thrown into obscurity. Neither the day nor the night, for the third part of it, shone; that is, the long-enjoyed light of imperial government and of religious privileges will, in that part of the empire, become extinct.

As Rome had been besieged and taken again and again by the northern barbarous nations, the Emperor Honorius

removed the seat of government to Ravenna, a place more easily defended; and he lived to see himself deprived of the richest, most beautiful portions of his dominions. The Huns had possession of Pannonia; the Alani, Suevi and Vandals established themselves in Spain, the Burgundians in France, and the Goths in Italy. At length Odoacer, king of the Heruli, having conquered Augustulus, the last of the Roman emperors, took possession of all Italy, and put an end to the western empire, in the year 476. About sixteen years after this, Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, made war upon these barbarian invaders, conquered Odoacer after several battles, and established the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy, which continued from the year 493 to 552.

13. *And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!—* Having thus shown in what manner the western part of the empire would be overthrown, we have in this verse an introductory announcement of the great calamities which would be inflicted on the eastern part. These are detailed under the three remaining trumpets, called the woe-trumpets. Another set of ruthless invaders, from another part of the world, viz., Arabia, were to make terrible devastation in that portion of the empire included in Asia. With peculiar emphasis, therefore, the angel reiterates the denunciation of woe upon the inhabitants of the land. The empire at this time consisted of two general divisions—the western, in which the imperial government had been subverted; and the eastern, in which it was greatly enfeebled.

## CHAPTER IX.

*The Saracen and Turkish Invasion.*

Verse 1. *And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.*—A star, as already explained, is a prince, a leader, or distinguished person. Heaven, is the Christian church, or civil government. The fall of a star from heaven to earth, may signify deposition from official station, or a perversion and degradation of office to that which is inappropriate, sordid, and evil. Some suppose that Mahomet is meant by this emblem. But he had never been connected with the Christian church, nor with civil government. When, in the year 612, he began to make pretensions to divine revelations, he was an obscure and ignorant man. Instead of falling from an elevated position, he rose from a low condition to one of singular eminence. That a *person* is meant by the star, is evident from the fact, that the personal pronoun *he* is used in reference to it, and personal acts are attributed to it. This star may be regarded as the Roman pontiff, or a succession of individuals in that official station.

In the sixth century, Gregory I., called also, the Great, filled the western churches with superstitious rites and observances. He inculcated, in his epistles and other writings, the worship of images and saints; purification in the fire of purgatory; the efficacy of the performance of religious ceremonies in procuring salvation; the power of relics to heal diseases, both of body and mind; and these relics he distributed in great profusion. The amazing superstitions fostered by that ambitious and bigoted prelate may be imagined in view of the fact stated by Mosheim, that the

people were made to believe, that "fetid oil, taken from the lamps which burned at the tombs of the martyrs, had a supernatural efficacy to sanctify its possessors, and to defend them from all dangers, both of a temporal and spiritual nature." "He prescribed a new method of administering the Lord's Supper, with a magnificent assemblage of pompous ceremonies, called *Canon of the mass*." "A vast many festivals were also instituted, similar to those of the heathen, among which was the festival of the purification of the blessed Virgin."

Beside all this, in the year 606, Boniface III. obtained from the Emperor Phocas, a detestable tyrant, the title of *universal bishop*, which introduced the papal supremacy. This established a hierarchy, which is subsequently described as the mother of abominations, drunk with the blood of the saints. *This made the Pope*; and some time after, Pepin made the Pope a *temporal* prince, thus secularizing and degrading the sacred office. A fallen star indeed! *To him was given the key of the bottomless pit*, a cavity in the earth, of great depth or extent. A key is an instrument used for fastening or unfastening a door, and is an emblem of authority, as in ch. 1 : 18; Isa. 22 : 22; Matt. 16 : 19. Giving the key to this person, signifies the granting to him of power or permission to do what is specified. The phrase, *bottomless pit*, occurs seven times in this book, and, like almost all other objects presented in these visions, has a figurative meaning, which is, an immense region covered with pagan darkness, where society is in a barbarous, unorganized, and disorderly state.

2. *And he opened the bottomless pit, &c.*—With his key he opened the great deep cavern, (*phrear tes abussou*, the well of the pit;) i.e., by his authority and influence, he prepared the way for the calamities which followed as the

merited chastisement of the Lord. A smoke arose which darkened the sun and the whole atmosphere. In Isaiah 14 : 31, smoke signifies the desolating calamity of an army of invaders, thus: "There shall come from the north a smoke." The smoke from the pit may be taken as the emblem of destructive errors, false doctrines, and corruption of Christian worship. As Christ is the sun of righteousness, and the gospel is the spiritual light of the world, any gross and wide-spread errors may be appropriately represented as a murky vapor, spreading gloom wherever it prevails. There was a vast volume of this smoke, as if from a great furnace.

3. *And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, &c.*—Out of the smoke came locusts upon the Roman earth; by which are meant the Saracens. The facts constituting the fulfillment are these:—The dissensions between the eastern and western portions of the empire concerning the errors, the superstitious rites, the worship of images, relics, &c., which were introduced by the Bishop of Rome, became the source of innumerable calamities and troubles, and weakened almost incredibly the force of the empire. The Saracens, or Arabians, improved the opportunity afforded by this state of things, to overrun all the Asiatic and African portion of the empire. "They extended their conquests even to Constantinople, opposed the progress of Christianity everywhere, and in some of the eastern countries extirpated it entirely." Gross errors and corruptions of religion obscured the light, and produced contention and civil discord; and these prepared the way for the invasion and rapid conquests of the Saracens. Thus from the smoke came the locusts. The appropriateness of the figure will be more apparent by considering, that the Saracens came from the extensive regions of Arabia, the very country

from which prodigious swarms of locusts originated, and spread themselves over the surrounding countries.

To them was given power like that of scorpions, which consists in inflicting poisonous and fatal wounds. A fit emblem truly of the destructive effects of the sentiments of Mahomet, which the Saracens diffused wherever they went.

4. *And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, &c.*—They were commanded *not to hurt the grass, &c.*, but *only the men* who were evidently not the servants of God. The fact is stated by Calmet, that when Abu Bekr was directing his march against Jerusalem, he addressed his chief commander thus:—"If you conquer, spare the aged, the infirm, the women and the children; cut down no palm trees; destroy not the fields of corn; spare all fruit trees; slay no cattle, but such as are absolutely necessary for food. Always preserve your engagements inviolate; spare the religious persons who dwell in monasteries, and injure not the places in which they worship God. As for those members of the congregation of Satan who shave their crowns, cleave their skulls, unless they embrace Islamism, or pay tribute." The grass, the green things and the trees are doubtless to be understood metaphorically, as meaning people of different ages and classes. Isa. 40 : 6, 7, *All flesh is grass; surely the people is grass.* 61 : 3, *They who mourn in Zion are called, Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.* This interpretation is supported also by the fact, that in contrast with these, a class of *men* are excepted from the prohibition to hurt, viz., those who have not the seal of God in their forehead. Further still, their power for evil was restricted to tormenting *the people* five months.

5. *And to them it was given that they should not kill*

*them, &c.*—To kill and to slay, signifies to destroy moral or political existence. The Saracens had not permission to inflict political death on the eastern portion of the empire, but to inflict great evils and distresses upon it. They did destroy the natural lives of very many; but still the countries which they overran continued nominally under the imperial government. These invaders seemed to aim chiefly at plundering and obtaining possession, so far as they thought desirable.

The length of time for which the Saracens were to inflict torments, was five months, which make one hundred and fifty days; and as a day, in prophetic account, stands for a year, the period designated is one hundred and fifty years. There is an allusion here to the natural life of the locust, which continues five months. They are hatched in the spring, and die in the autumn. As applied to the Saracens, it perfectly coincided with fact; for Mahomet began to make known his pretended revelations as a prophet in the year 612; and in 762, just one hundred and fifty years after, Almanzor, the Saracen king, built Bagdad, calling it the City of Peace. The Saracens made no more conquests, ceased from their ravages, and soon declined in power.

6. *And in those days shall men seek death and shall not find it; &c.*—This verse gives an impressive representation of the distresses to which Christians would be subjected under these invaders. Though at first they were treated with moderation, yet, after a little while, they were loaded with insupportable taxes, and subjected to a variety of vexatious and oppressive measures. Mosheim states that “the bitter dissensions, and cruel animosities, that reigned among the Christian sects, particularly the Greeks, Nestorians, Eutichians, and Monophysites, filled the great part of the east with carnage, assassinations, and such de-



testable enormities, as rendered the very name of Christianity odious to many. Not only so, but the Monophysites and Nestorians, full of resentment against the Greeks, assisted the Saracens in the conquest of several provinces, into which as a consequence, the Mahometan religion was introduced." Thus did these mutually contending Christian sects seek death, that is, the extinction of their ecclesiastical and political existence, and yet, they were held by their victorious enemies as Christians still, and were oppressed and despised by them as such.

7. *And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle ; &c.*—We have now a symbolical description of the locusts, which shows on the face of it, that something is meant very different from those insects. No such creatures as are here described ever existed anywhere. Their shapes were like those of horses accoutered for battle. The Arabians were noted for their horses, and their principal force in war consisted of cavalry. On their heads were what seemed to be crowns of gold, denoting their subjugation of valuable countries to their authority, or referring to the turbans which they wore. Their faces like those of men, symbolizes their wisdom, skill, and resolution in conducting their conquests.

8. *And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.*—*They had hair like that of women.* It is well known that the men wore their hair braided or flowing down their backs ; but as the whole description relates to the characters and actions of this people, we must understand by their long hair, an effeminacy and tenderness of the other sex, for which they were remarkable. *Teeth like those of lions* expresses their rapacity and power to destroy.

9. *And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron ; &c.*—Their breastplates as if of iron, indicate their care in protecting themselves ; and the sound of their wings resembling that of chariots with many horses rushing to battle, represents the impetuosity of their attacks, and the rapidity of their conquests.

10. *And they had tails like unto scorpions ; &c.* Their tails like those of scorpions, armed with stings, are symbolic of the poisonous sentiments which they infused into the minds of men wherever they went. They spread the religion of Mahomet by artifice and violence ; and it has remained working its destructive effects to this day. As the period of five months in which they were to hurt men, is mentioned the second time, it has been thought, that the first named five months extend to the time of their greatest prosperity ; and that these last five months, or 150 years, extend to their final overthrow and subjugation, making 300 years in all. This was the extent of the Saracen dominion, for, in the early part of the eleventh century they were overcome by the Turks after long and bloody conflicts. This description is true to the life ; the Saracens were at first mild and winning, and seemed inclined to bring Christians and others to embrace Mahometanism by moderate means, but at length their cruelties and enormities in plundering and murdering Christians, were terrible as the teeth of lions.

11. *And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, &c.*—This king was the angel of the bottomless pit ; then surely, that pit is not what it has generally been understood to be ; for this king and angel is undoubtedly Mahomet, who himself set the example of spreading his religion among the Arabians at the head of an army.

His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon, both signifying a Destroyer. Of this ferocious and destructive people he was the great prophet, and to his authority they yielded implicit obedience. Says a historian, "elated with his rapid and unexpected success, he extended yet further his ambitious views, and formed the vast and arduous project of founding an empire." His plan was executed with such intrepidity and impudence, that he died master of all Arabia, and of several adjacent countries.

Here we have confirmation of the interpretation I have given. The star mentioned at the beginning of this chapter is not Mahomet,—the bottomless pit is not the infernal world, or place of future punishment, and the king of the locusts is not the Caliph, nor succession of Caliphs.

12. *One woe is past ; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.*—The Saracen woe trumpet extended to about A.D. 1060. The Turkish woe trumpet comes next.

13, 14. *And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.*—The golden altar, on which incense was offered, stood before the mercy seat outside of the vail in the sanctuary. The incense offered there was emblematic of the prayers of God's people. The voice proceeding from the four elevated corners of the altar, calling for the infliction of this judgment, shows, that the cause of it was the amazing and universal corruption of Christian worship, in the respects which have already been noticed.

The four angels to be loosed were the chiefs of the four Turkish sultanies or governments, by whose instrumentality these calamities would be inflicted. The Turks, who are the people meant, lived north and east of the Caspian Sea ; and their being bound by the river Euphrates, signi-

fies, that they had been restrained from making invasions west of that river. Now they were to be loosed from that restraint.

15. *And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, &c.*—This was accordingly done; and the time for making their conquests and arriving at the height of their power, is definitely stated. It was a year, which, in prophetic reckoning, is 360 days, and a month, which is 30 days, which with the 1 day, make 391 days, by which years are meant. The one hour is by the same computation fifteen days more. History shows that the fulfillment has been exact as to the years, and doubtless it has been the same in regard to the fifteen days. About the year 1067 or '62 in prophetic time, Tangrolipix put an end to the Saracen dominion by conquering the Caliph of Persia, and established the Turkish empire on its ruins. In 1453, the Turks took Constantinople, and thus attained the height of their power in the Roman empire. The period between the two dates is 391 years. As John intimates, they were *prepared* in this period for a long exercise of civil rule; and thus it continues to the present day.

16. *And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: &c.*—It is probable, that a definite number is used in this verse for an indefinite, signifying that their armies consisted of a vast number, which was a fact.

17. *And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, &c.*—This description of the horses and the riders, shows plainly who are meant. Breastplates, of course, could not be made of fire, but were of fiery appearance, and of a deep purple and yellow color com-

bined expressed by hyacinth and brimstone—that is, their breastplates were of polished brass. The heads of the horses resembled those of lions, indicating fierceness and disregard of danger. The fire, smoke and brimstone proceeding out of their mouths constitute a remarkable part of this description. In this century gunpowder was invented, and was used by the Turks in their wars. Their armies were composed chiefly of horsemen, and discharging their firearms over their horses' heads as they rode, gave the appearance of fire and smoke proceeding out of their mouths.

18. *By these three was the third part of men killed, &c.*—By these three means a third part of men were reduced to political and religious subjection. The *third part* refers to the eastern portion of the empire, that being one of the three general divisions. When the Turks became masters of Constantinople they had possession of all the Asiatic portion of the empire.

19. *For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails : &c.*—This verse is an explanation of the preceding, as the particle *for* implies; and here it may be perceived, that the killing of men is not a literal putting of them to death. The power in their mouth signifies their means of successful warfare just described;—that in their tails refers to the principles of Islamism which they enforced. Their conquests were obtained by their firearms and by the doctrines they propagated. Multitudes of Christians consented to receive the religion of their Mahometan conquerors, rather than suffer what they must have done, if they had continued steadfast.

The Saracen locusts are compared to Scorpions, inflicting torment with their stings; and the same figure is adopted

in this description of the Turks, the religion of both being the same. A similar figure is employed in chap. 12 : 4. The body of a scorpion resembles that of a lobster, made up of connected parts or rings. The tail is long, and composed also of successive rings, the last of which is larger than the others, and is divided into seven little heads. The central, and prominent one, has a sting, which injects a deadly poison into the wound it makes. An appropriate emblem, truly ! The result was, that Christianity was almost wholly extinguished in Asia.

20 and 21. *And the rest of the men, which were not killed by these plaques, &c. Neither repented they of their murders, &c.*—The rest of the men, who were not brought under this subjection, were those who lived in the western or European part of the empire. Though they knew of the calamities which had fallen upon the eastern portion of the church, they repented not of their idolatry, and of their gross corruptions of Christian worship and doctrines. They persisted in paying homage to demons, *i.e.*, deified men, saints, images, and crucifixes. When Mahomet began his conquests, he avowed his design to be, to destroy idolatry, both among the heathen, and among Christians, and his followers were true to this design. To this day they are opposed to all worship which is not paid to the Supreme Being. Yet those who were not subdued by them continued on in their superstitious and idolatrous practices.

Neither did they cease from their persecutions, their deceptions and feigned miracles, their lewdness, and their fraudulent methods of obtaining money from the people. What immense sums have been received by the sale of indulgences, and for the absolution of sins, for relics, charms, and amulets, and numerous other worthless things ! The various methods of obtaining money from all classes of

people under false pretenses, is fitly termed *theft*. Of these things they did not repent, and the practice of them is continued to this day.

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## CHAPTER X.

*The Crusades.*

THE events predicted in this chapter are included under the sixth trumpet, which relates to the rise and progress of the Ottoman or Turkish empire, and are embraced in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. No interpretation which I have seen of this chapter, is at all satisfactory to my mind. Indeed, if my views are correct, commentators have not even touched the real subject of it. Much has been written about the contents of the *little book*, and the events to which they are supposed to refer. But John says not one word about its contents, except, that when he ate it, his mouth was made sweet and his *stomach* bitter.

The questions, which it is the business of an interpreter to answer, are these:—Who, or what is the mighty angel arrayed in a cloud, having a sun-like countenance, and feet of brass so polished, that they appeared like fire? What is the little open book? What means the significant act of planting one foot on the land, and the other on the sea? A mighty stride indeed! And what is the great thing signified by the roaring of those seven thunders? This sublime imagery is not designed as mere costume, but doubtless had its verification in very important events. If the symbols are not first explained, we are left entirely to fanciful conjecture.

1. *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, &c.*—Heaven is the usual emblem of civil or ecclesiastical government, or both united. An angel is any agent or instrumentality by which the events spoken of are brought to pass. The mighty angel which came down from heaven, and which John is careful to say is *another*, that is, different from any of the preceding, cannot of course be Christ, as some have thought. I consider him a personification of the combined power of popes, emperors, kings, and princes, to carry forward those amazing expeditions for driving out the Mahometans from the holy land, and to rescue Jerusalem from their possession, and to deliver the imploring Christians there from their oppressors. The description of that *mighty* angel is to my mind sufficient proof of the correctness of this opinion. He was clothed with a cloud, and clouds are emblems of great bodies of people. A rainbow was upon his head, signifying faithfulness to covenant engagements; and these vast and expensive expeditions, which exhausted the treasures of Europe, were gotten up with a professed regard to fidelity to Christ and his cause; and with a sense of obligation to relieve Christians from the intolerable oppression of their inveterate enemies, the Turks.

His face was as it were the sun. Now, it is well known that the sun is an emblem of supreme authority, exercised by one or by many. There is then, in this case, a prediction of the concentration of the wisdom, power, and energies of sovereigns. His feet like pillars of fire, indicate a glowing zeal, and steadfast purpose to tread down and subdue enemies, and to surmount all difficulties.

What now do the records of history show in regard to remarkable events at this period? They present to us those stupendous enterprises, the crusades, or holy wars, in which most of the nations of Europe engaged with great



enthusiasm. The famous Hildebrand, afterward Pope Gregory VII., first formed the resolution to prosecute a holy war for the deliverance of the Asiatic Christians and the city of Jerusalem from the infidel Turks. An army of fifty thousand men was mustered to follow him in this enterprise; but owing to some difficulty with Henry IV. king of France, it was relinquished. Some time after, Peter the hermit, assisted by Pope Urban II., aroused all Europe to this great expedition; and “eight hundred thousand men, in separate bodies, and under different commanders, set out for Constantinople in the year 1096.” Thence they proceeded through Asia Minor and Syria, capturing Nice, Antioch, and Edessa on their way. Jerusalem was besieged and taken by that division of the army which was commanded by Godfrey and his brother Baldwin, in 1099. These crusades were renewed several times after the Turks obtained again possession of the holy land in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, and chiefly through the influence of successive popes. The kings of England and France, and other European sovereigns, went *in person* in these expeditions, at the head of immense armies. Here we have the verification of the *mighty angel, clothed with a cloud, with a face like the sun, and feet like pillars of fire*. To me it does not seem probable, that the Holy Spirit would have made known to John the conquest of those countries by the Saracens and Turks, and yet omit entirely to foretell those prodigious and long continued efforts of Christians to wrest them out of their possession. And yet expositors, with whose writings I am acquainted, seem never to have thought of the crusades in this connection.

2. *And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, &c.*—What this little book is, cannot easily be determined, and conjectures are nume-

rous as to its contents. Passing them all by, I would remark, that as it was in the hand of the symbolic angel, it probably had reference to the events to which allusion has just been made. It may represent the system of Christianity, for which these holy wars were carried on at a great sacrifice of treasure and life. To show, that they were contending for that cause, each man wore upon his right shoulder a figure of the cross.

We have next a significant action of the angel, viz., setting his *right* foot on the sea, and his *left* on the land. If, by the sea he meant the Mediterranean, and by the land, the European portion of the empire, the angel would appear with his face and front toward the holy land, as though he were going thither. This extended position shows plainly, that it was not a real angel, as writers have supposed. The whole is symbolic, and as I think, foreshows the fact, that all the maritime nations of Europe would combine their power, and be of one mind, as if they were but one person, to prosecute those wars against the infidel Turks in the east. Whatever were their disagreements in other things, in this they were united and astonishingly zealous. Of this, the one *mighty angel* was an appropriate symbol.

3. *And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth : and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.*—Standing thus upon the sea and the land, he cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth, as if to rouse up the nations ; which, as I think, refers to the thrilling appeals, which rung through Europe, exciting people of all classes to engage in these expeditions.

And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. Thunders are well known emblems of wars. There were, then, seven periods for the renewal of these wars:

Now, I find, that such was their number, reckoning the two expeditions of Louis IX., king of France, as the continuation of the same war; and this was the last. The first was in the eleventh century,—the second and third were in the twelfth century, and the others were in the thirteenth century.

4. *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write, &c.*—John was commanded to seal up the things intended by the seven thunders, as things not then to be made known. Had they been understood, who can imagine what an additional stimulus would have been given to those disastrous and useless wars.

5, 6 and 7. *And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth forever and ever, &c.*—Another symbolic action of the angel was his solemn asseveration, that time should be no longer; or, as probably it should be read, *The time shall not be yet.* To suppose, that this refers to the end of the world is a groundless conjecture. It undoubtedly refers to the events which the writer is here foretelling; and it seems to me, that the signification is this;—the entire failure of all these vast, expensive, and long continued expeditions to accomplish their object, proclaimed to the world in a solemn manner, that the time had not come to dispossess the Mahometans of the holy land, and the neighboring countries. So it has proved, and they are the possessors of them to this day. Though important cities were at different times taken by the crusaders, such as Jerusalem, Constantinople, Damietta, and Ptolemais; yet they were soon retaken by the Turks. The affirmation given with such peculiar solemnity, has been fully verified in the lapse of six centuries. In the year

1291, the Mahometans captured Ptolemais, now called Acre, and entirely overthrew the Roman empire in the east.

We are then informed when that power will be destroyed; and it will be when the seventh angel shall begin to sound. Then the mystery of God, as declared by the prophets, will be finished. Then an end will be put to the Turkish power, the Mahometan delusion, and the oppression of the church. The seventh trumpet will introduce the millennium.

8, 9, and 10. *And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth, &c.*—The voice from heaven, which bade John seal up the things signified by the thunders, commanded him to take the little book and eat it up, informing him that it would be sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his *stomach*. So it proved.

I understand all this as a visionary representation;—the subject of them being in a trance. The idea intended to be conveyed by eating the book, and by the effect produced, I suppose to be, that the events to which the book refers, would at the first be pleasing and promise much good, but that afterwards they would prove very disastrous and mortifying. If the crusades be meant, they very happily illustrate the emblem. For those enterprises were undertaken with uncommon enthusiasm and confident expectations of great good; but the results were in all respects injurious and humiliating. Most of the sovereigns of Europe engaged in these wars, and the resources of Christendom were employed to wrest from the Mahometans their usurped possessions in and about the holy land; but it was all in vain. Places which were res-

cued from the infidels at a vast expense of treasure and blood, were soon brought in subjection to them again.

11. *And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*—The apostle was informed, that he had yet to prophesy *concerning* many nations and kings. The term *again* seems to imply, that what he would foretell would relate to the same nations and kingdoms, as those of whom he had written. The succeeding chapters show this to be the fact. The translation should not have been, Thou shalt prophesy again *before* many peoples; as if it were to be in the presence of them all, which was not the case, but *concerning* many people, nations, &c. Had this been observed, it would have prevented the unnatural and irrelevant interpretation thus given—"The apostle is doing this to the present day, in all the languages into which the Scriptures have been translated."

The next chapter is a continuation of the same chain of events in reference, as I conceive, to the Mahometan power, the final overthrow of which is announced by the words, "The second woe is past." The writer's method is this:—With the sounding of the sixth trumpet, he takes up the prophecy of the Turkish persecuting power, and continues it to the extinction of that power. Then in the twelfth chapter he commences his prophecy of the Roman persecuting power, and carries it on to the ultimate destruction of that power, as set forth in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters. As each of these powers arose about the same time, and both are to continue 1260 years; it was necessary, when he had finished the prophecy of one, that he should go back, as to the order of time, and commence with the other. This synchronism and arrangement should be carefully observed. A failure in this particular,

or a misconception of the apostle's design, is the cause, perhaps, of the erroneous interpretation which has been given of this, and the following chapter. Confusion and obscurity are thus thrown over this portion of the book.

Furthermore, the apostle is incorrectly represented as going back at the commencement of the twelfth chapter, to the early days of Christianity, and instituting a new prophetic series in reference to the same countries and the same civil powers of which he had previously spoken. Thus Dr. Scott remarks, "The prophet must, therefore, somewhere *go back* to take a more particular view of his subject, than he at first gave: but no place can be assigned for this, so rationally as the close of the eleventh chapter." Other distinguished writers have adopted the same idea.

Then, also, in violation of the regular chronological arrangement of the book, they have applied what is said of the two witnesses in the next chapter to the papal persecution of the reformers in Europe; whereas the apostle does not take up the subject of the Roman hierarchy until he comes to the twelfth chapter. The following, as I think, is the true order of events. The ninth chapter is wholly occupied with the rise, and the conquests of the Saracens first, and then of the Turks. The tenth is occupied with the efforts of Christendom during three centuries, to expel the infidel Turks from the Holy Land, viz.: the crusades. The eleventh is a continuation of the prophecy concerning the Turkish power, which is the eastern Antichrist, to its final overthrow and extinction near the millennium. Then, in the twelfth chapter, the writer commences his prediction of the western Antichrist, which is the papal hierarchy; and traces that onward also to the millennium. Nowhere does he go back, and pass over the ground again, except, that when he takes up the subject of the western Antichrist, he commences with its

origin. Just as the writer of a history of two countries would begin with the early periods of one of them; and, having given the record of events up to a certain time, would then do the same with the other. The prophetic portion of the book should be regarded as presenting a regular series of important events pertaining to the Christian church, ending with its final triumphs over all its enemies.

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## CHAPTER XI.

*The State of the Church under the Turkish dominion ;  
and its Ultimate Deliverance from Oppression.*

THE events predicted in the first thirteen verses of this chapter are included in the period of the sixth trumpet, which is the Mahometan woe-trumpet; and therefore does not refer to the western part of the empire, as it is generally explained. In the fourteenth verse it is emphatically declared, that '*the second woe is past,*' which ends the sixth trumpet, and the Turkish Mahometan power. The verses immediately preceding are to be interpreted as relating to that power. The interruption of the subject here by the interposition of a new chapter must not be regarded. The preceding chapter is occupied, as I conceive, with those civil and military movements called the crusades, and with their disastrous results. This chapter predicts the calamities of the church inflicted by the same persecuting power, and its deliverance by the extinction of that power. I am constrained to dissent entirely from commentators and prophetic writers, who agree in interpreting these first thirteen verses as relating to the protestant reformation and the persecution of the Waldenses and Albigenses, or other

early reformers in the western part of the empire. This error is one of the principal reasons why it has been so difficult to understand this, and the two succeeding chapters. John, guided by the revealing angel, has not thrown this confusion into his prophecy. He finishes one branch of his prophetic disclosures before he takes up another. And here we have only to bear in mind, that he does not finish the Mahometan woe-trumpet, till he comes to the announcement in the fourteenth verse, *The second woe is past.*

1. *And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.*—This verse is a part of the same prophetic narration which closes the preceding chapter, as the connecting particle *and* implies. It should be read thus,—*And he gave me a reed like a staff, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar of sacrifice, and those who worship by it.* The temple and its inner courts are emblems of the Christian church, and the altar on which the burnt sacrifices were offered, is the emblem of Christian worship; and the last clause concerning the worshipers, gives an intimation of the meaning of the whole. It is as if the angel had said, Go and ascertain the spiritual condition of the true church, and its worship, and those who are connected with it. Apply the infallible rule of divine truth to them, that it may be seen whether they are what they should be. In like manner Ezekiel was shown a man with a line and measuring reed in his hand, who took the dimensions of the temple and its various appurtenances. Zachariah also saw in a vision a man with a line proceeding to measure Jerusalem, signifying the care and protection which God would exercise over it.



2. *But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not ; for it is given unto the Gentiles ; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*—The inner court in which stood the altar of sacrifice, was that in which the priests officiated ; the outer court was appropriated to the Gentiles, those who were not by birth Israelites, meaning in this case, those who are not of the Christian church. The holy city is Jerusalem itself, and this they were to tread, that is, inhabit, possess, and occupy forty-two months. In prophecy thirty days are a month, and forty-two months make twelve hundred and sixty days, and by these *years* are intended. The Gentiles, who are to do this, are the Mahometans, and the simple idea is, that they will have possession of the holy city for the length of time specified.

If we date the rise of that denomination in 612, the time that Mahomet began to assert his claim to divine inspiration, the twelve hundred and sixty years will terminate in 1854, reckoning as is usual in prophecy, three hundred and sixty days to a year. If we date it in 622, which was the time of his flight from Mecca and the commencement of his conquests, (and his followers make this the date) then the twelve hundred and sixty years will close in the year 1864. Till then, they will tread, possess and occupy the holy city. Here we have confirmation of the interpretation previously given of the solemn affirmation of the mighty angel, whose voice like that of a roaring lion, roused up the crusaders,—‘ *The time shall not be yet.*’ The power and resources of Christendom employed at intervals in three successive centuries, could not dispossess the infidels, as they were called, of Jerusalem and the holy land. They have it still, and doubtless will have it, till the expiration of the period declared by Christ’s prophet. Of course, I dissent entirely from the opinion of expositors,

who make these Gentiles to mean the papists of Europe, and this treading of the holy city to be the persecution of the Waldenses and other protestants. The arrangement, which the writer has made of his symbols, one would think, is enough to preclude such an interpretation. The temple with its inner court represents the true church with its worship; the outer court of the Gentiles, who were so far favorable to the Jewish religion as to witness and participate in the worship of the true God, represents the Mahometans, who also worship the true God, and receive the scriptures of the Old Testament. And the holy city is Jerusalem, including the country of which it is the capital, and which they shall possess for the specified time.

3. *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*—We are here informed what shall be the condition of the Christian church under this Mahometan supremacy. The two witnesses are representatives of a succession of men, who maintain the pure doctrines of Christianity, and contend for purity of Christian worship. Thus Christ said to his disciples, ‘Ye shall be my witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.’ *Two* witnesses are mentioned, doubtless in reference to the Jewish law, which required at least two witnesses to prove an allegation. These shall prophesy, *i.e.* preach, inculcate, declare the truth for the same period of the Mahometan supremacy, *viz.*, twelve hundred and sixty years, clothed in sackcloth, that is, in a state of great depression, affliction, and trial. How fully does history illustrate this prediction! Long since, Mahometans had nearly extinguished the light of Christianity all through the east. What became of the very numerous churches formed by the indefatigable labors of the Nestorians, and

which previous to the fourteenth century, flourished in Tartary and the northern provinces of China? A single quotation from Mosheim will answer the question. "The Turks and Tartars destroyed wherever they went, the fruits which had sprung up in such a rich abundance from the labors of the Christian missionaries, extirpated the religion of Jesus in several provinces and cities where it flourished, and substituted the impostures of Mahomet in its place. Many of the Tartars had formerly professed the gospel, and still more had tolerated the exercise of that divine religion; but from the beginning of this (the fourteenth) century, things put on a new face, and that fierce nation renounced every other religious doctrine, except that of the Alcoran." Tamerlane, their mighty emperor, embraced the doctrine of Mahomet, and having subdued the greatest part of Asia, made use of his authority to force multitudes of Christians to apostatize from their holy faith. Persuaded that it was his duty to persecute the Christians, he employed the most inhuman acts of severity to vanquish the magnanimous constancy of those, who persevered in their attachment to the Christian religion, of whom some suffered death in the most barbarous forms, while others were condemned to perpetual slavery.\* I would ask also, what became of the numerous churches which the same Nestorians formed all over Persia? They shared the common fate of others, wherever the conquering power of the Turks extended itself, except the few which have remained sheltered and unknown among the almost inaccessible mountains of Kurdistan, and which have recently been discovered by our persevering devoted missionaries. The Nestorians still live, and in their secluded fastnesses, have preserved the Christian religion for centuries. They have continued to prophesy, though imperfectly for want

\* Mos. Vol. 3, p. 1, ch. 2, cent. 14.

of the means of knowledge, and they have prophesied in sackcloth indeed.

4. *These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*—These two witnesses are called olive-trees, which are emblems employed both in the Old and New Testament to signify true believers, or faithful ministers who diffuse the light of divine truth in the world. Thus Zachariah was shown in an entranced state, a candlestick, having two olive trees, one standing on each side, supplying the lamps with pure oil. An angel informed him that these were the two anointed ones, or more literally, the two sons of oil, who stand before the Lord of the whole earth, meaning Zerubbabel and Joshua, the servants of the Lord, whom he employed for the rebuilding of the temple and city of Jerusalem. Zach. 4 : 11, 14. John undoubtedly refers to this passage. A candlestick is an emblem of the church. Christ himself says, chap. 1 : 20, the seven candlesticks are the seven churches. In Asia the two great divisions of the Christian church were the Greek and the Nestorian. The two witnesses, called also two olive-trees and the two candlesticks, represent the churches in the east, which faithfully maintained the truth; and not the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Reformers in the west, according to the interpretation of Scott, Faber, and others.

• 5. *And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.*—We are here informed of the kind of warfare, these faithful men would carry on with their enemies. It would be a moral warfare, whose weapon of defense and attack would proceed from *the mouth*, and it would not of course be literal fire, but, metaphorically, *the fire of truth*. This is God's own

figure, for said he to Jeremiah, "Behold, I will make *my words* in thy mouth, *fire*, and this people wood, and it shall devour them." Those bold defenders of divine truth would so wield it, and so expose the errors and unchristian practices of their adversaries, that they would be self-condemned, would sink into contempt, and their cause would be overthrown. The fire of truth will consume them. If any man shall maliciously inflict injury upon them, he must be killed *in this manner*. In what manner? Not by being put to death; but he will be condemned by the truth; will lose his influence and be covered with ignominy. The term to kill and to slay often has a moral or political signification only, as in chap. 9: 18, and in Isa. 14: 30. *I will kill thy root with famine, i.e. I will destroy the source of thy prosperity.* And again in 2d Cor. 3: 6. *The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.* In this sense it is common to use the phrase, as when we say of those who have lost their influence, or are deprived of their official station and power, they are killed,—they are crushed and dead. "The Pope is dead."

6. *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*—The power which these witnesses will have with God by faith and prayer is represented to be like that of Elijah, who prayed, and it rained not, and like that of Moses, who caused the waters of Egypt to become as blood, and smote the land with plagues. It is probable however, that this is to be understood metaphorically, as meaning, that on account of the treatment of the witnesses, there would be a general spiritual death, a decline of vital religion,—sanguinary contentions about the things of religion, and the infliction of various calamities

upon the people. History informs us, that such were the facts to a distressing degree.

7. *And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*—

When the destined period of twelve hundred and sixty years shall draw toward its close, and these faithful men shall have completed the time of bearing their testimony, a power denominated the *beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit*, will fight against them, overcome them, and kill them, that is, will persecute and subdue them, destroy their influence, and drive them into obscurity. Who will do this? The Pope of Rome, say the expositors of prophecy. John says, *The beast that cometh up out of the bottomless pit*, and this is not the Pope, nor the papal church. A wild beast, as the original signifies, is a persecuting civil power. The bottomless pit, or deep abyss, in the language of this writer, is a portion of the earth where ignorance, moral darkness, heathenism, and barbarism prevail. The phrase occurs three times in the ninth chapter and evidently means the region from which the fierce and rapacious Saracens issued. The locusts which came out of the smoke of the pit, are acknowledged to be that people, who conquered and ravaged western Asia, Egypt, and Africa. It was from such an abyss, that the Turks issued, who also had embraced Mahometanism, and as they spread their conquests over the same portions of Asia, they oppressed the Christians, broke up their societies, demolished their temples, and practiced against them terrible cruelties. The Roman church did not arise from such a region, but from the richest, most cultivated, refined, and delightful portion of Europe; and is described in its proper place, as an animal having two horns like a lamb. (Ch. 13: 11.) It is the

Mahometan power, as I think, which is represented here, as opposing, subduing, and driving into obscurity those who are meant by the witnesses.

One can hardly avoid the conclusion, that commentators never thought that Christianity ever flourished much except in Europe, and in the countries bordering upon Palestine; or, that Christians had ever suffered persecution except in those countries, and *there*, chiefly from the Roman Catholics. Mosheim, however, states, in describing the condition of the Christian religion in the far east in the fifteenth century, that “in the vast regions of the eastern world, Christianity lost ground from day to day, and the Mahometans united their barbarous efforts to extinguish its bright and salutary luster. Asiatic Tartary, Mogol, Tangut, and the adjacent provinces, where the religion of Jesus had long flourished, now became the dismal seats of superstition, which reigned among them under the vilest forms. Nor, in these immense tracts of country, were there any traces of Christianity visible except in China, where the Nestorians still preserved some scattered remains of their former glory. In this century the Nestorian pontiff at Chaldea sent missionaries to Cathay and China, who were empowered to exercise the authority of bishops over the Christian assemblies, which lay concealed in the remote provinces of these great empires.” These remarks of his, I discovered after having written the interpretation which precedes them; and I introduce them as confirming the interpretation, and showing how and where the witnesses have prophesied in sackcloth. After having thus spoken of the Nestorian churches in the east, he adds in regard to the Greek church in the same period, that “The ruin of the Grecian empire was a new source of calamities to the Christian church in the greatest part of Europe and Asia. When the Turks, headed by Mahomet

II., an accomplished prince and formidable warrior, had made themselves masters of Constantinople in the year 1453; the cause of Christianity received a blow, from which it has never as yet recovered. Its adherents in those parts had no resources left, which could enable them to maintain it against the perpetual insults of their fierce and incensed victors, nor could they stem the torrent of barbarism and ignorance that rushed in with the triumphant arms of Mahomet. The Turks took one part of Constantinople by force of arms; the other surrendered upon terms. Hence it was, that in the former, the public profession of the gospel was prohibited, and every vestige of Christianity effaced; while the inhabitants of the latter were permitted to retain their churches and monasteries, during the whole course of this century,\* and to worship God according to the precepts of the gospel, and the dictates of their consciences. This precious liberty, however, was considerably diminished under the reign of Selim I., and the Christian worship was loaded with severe and despotic restrictions. The outward form of the Christian church was not, indeed, either changed or destroyed by the Turks, but its luster was eclipsed, its strength was undermined, and it was gradually attenuated to a mere shadow under their tyrannic empire."† The two witnesses I consider to be the Greek and Nestorian churches in Asia, and the persecution against them has been continued to the present time.

8. *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*—As the witnesses are not two persons, but a succession of faithful believers united in Christian churches; so their dead bodies are not the lifeless

\* The fifteenth.

† Mos. vol. iii. p. 2, c. 2.



remains of individuals, but their churches, societies, and communities. All is symbolic. Even the time specified is not to be understood literally, for days signify years. Their being warred against, overcome, and killed, means, that they would be opposed, persecuted, and deprived of their influence and their rights, become few and feeble, and be thrust into obscurity. As decency and proper respect for the dead require, that they should be interred; their remaining unburied signifies their exposure to public indignity, contempt, and base treatment. Denial of the right of sepulture is the denial of the lowest, smallest of all human privileges.

A city is often put for the whole country of which it is the capital, and when the phrase is taken in that large sense, *the street* of a city, is some important part of the country or empire. Here the place seems to be particularly designated. It is not Rome, nor Europe, as has been supposed. The great city is *spiritually*, in a moral respect, *called Sodom and Egypt*;—a city that is like Sodom for licentiousness and wickedness, and like Egypt for oppression of the Lord's people, and which the inspired prophets have called by those names. Now Isaiah expressly calls the rulers of Jerusalem, "rulers of Sodom" (1 : 10). And Ezekiel repeatedly likens Jerusalem to Sodom (chap. 16). That this is the great city referred to, seems to be made quite evident by its being *where our Lord was crucified*. This explanatory clause is added on purpose to designate the place. Jerusalem is the great center of Mahometanism, where stands their most splendid mosque on the very site of Solomon's temple.

That great city has been and still is preeminent for the indignities and contempt shown to Christians. An occurrence detailed in the Narrative of the late Expedition to the Dead Sea, will sufficiently illustrate this. A party of

Americans belonging to that expedition were in Jerusalem, and under the guidance of the American missionary there, went out to take a view of the city. They came near to the Open Gateway of the Grand Mosque, and as they stood looking at it, they were suddenly assaulted by a guard of Turkish soldiers, who, in the language of one of the party, "set upon beating us in the most shameful and disgraceful manner with sticks and clubs which they carried, in the name of the Holy Prophet, calling us 'Christian dogs,' &c. We could not speak their language, and therefore could not reason with these savage fellows; all gesticulating demonstrations were unavailing, and their madness and fury increased as we parried their blows in our retreat." "The savage clan then betook themselves to stones which lay scattered along the road. Our unfortunate missionary received a sad bruise from one of these well-directed missives hurled at us in the name of the prophet Mahomet. We took a wrong course and found ourselves brought up by a high stone wall, and our pursuers yelled with savage delight, and set upon us with renewed fury, kicking, whipping, stoning, and spitting upon us." They were then taken to the Judgment Hall, where they were examined before the Pasha, released and sent away. Such, to this day, are the feelings of contempt and hatred cherished by the Mahometans against Christians.

In the third verse we are informed that the witnesses shall prophesy 1260 days, and in the seventh verse, that when they shall have finished their testimony, they shall be overcome and slain, which leads us to conclude that the completion of that work is yet future, for the 1260 years do not terminate sooner than 1854. It is possible then, that as protestant missions are again resumed in the east, and are having considerable success, that soon there will be a strong demonstration of hostility to them, and the

missionaries be greatly embarrassed in their labors. It may be, that the opposition to missions among the Nestorians, the massacre of so many of that people, and the destruction of their villages which took place a little while since, together with the persecution of the converted Armenians, is a part of the fulfillment of this prophecy. At any rate, we may be quite certain, that we are near the accomplishment of what is here predicted.

9. *And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.*—They shall see from among the people, and tribes, and tongues, and nations, their dead bodies three and an half days, and shall not permit them to be put in monuments or tombs. The word is *mneima*, ‘that which reminds, a memorial.’ The idea seems to be, that the people of Palestine and the surrounding countries, will not allow any monument or memorial to remain to keep up the remembrance of these churches of faithful believers, and of the effects of their pious labors. This desolation shall be witnessed for the specified time.

10. *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another ; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.*—This verse expresses the satisfaction and demonstrations of joy which will be made by those who dwell in the countries where this suppression of Christian truth and ordinances will be experienced. They will greatly rejoice because their consciences will be no more disturbed and their fears excited by these defenders of revealed truth and of a pure worship. Their testimony against prevailing superstitions and errors will be silenced.

11. *And after three days and an half the Spirit of li from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.*—Who can read this attentively and not perceive, that it is wholly symbolical? Revivification and resurrection mean in prophecy a restoration to moral, religious, or political existence, of which a people had been deprived. The sentiment expressed here is, that by the interposition and power of God, those faithful servants of his, who are represented by the witnesses, would be restored to the enjoyment of their rights, would be raised to influence, would resume their wonted labors; and true religion be made prosperous again. This will be after the specified time of their oppression shall have passed. This restoration to favor and to the enjoyment of civil and religious rights, will fill their oppressors with consternation; for it will be the sure precursor of the ruin of their cause, and of the triumph of Christianity.

12. *And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.*—A voice from heaven is a proclamation from the civil authority; and the utterance, *Come up hither*, is an order for the restoration of civil rights and the enjoyment of religious privileges. Its significancy is, Be no longer disfranchised. Have the same immunities as others. Be at liberty to pursue your chosen avocations, to acquire influence, and to exercise official authority in common with others. This is an edict for full toleration. Whether the recent ordinance of the Grand Sultan in favor of the protestant religion, tolerating and protecting it, be the fulfillment of this we cannot now determine. Probably it is a measure prepara-

tory to another more liberal and decisive, which is yet to come.

The accomplishment of this order is then declared. They are restored to former influence, they are restored to civil rights, they share in civil offices, and with them rises the cause which most of all they venerate and love.

*In a cloud.* This is emblematic of a multitude; and the meaning is, that a great number of these witness-bearing people will at once, probably by an edict of government, be raised to these privileges. This will be done in the midst of their enemies,—they *beholding* them.

The opinion of Fleming and others who consider the fulfillment of this to have been the combined efforts of Maurice, elector of Saxony, and other protestant princes for the defence of the protestant cause, is altogether too preposterous to be entertained.

That league, called the League of Smalcald, was formed in 1530, but the prophesying of the witnesses does not close until the year 1854. Scott says, "It should be noted, that this exceedingly depressed state of Christianity seems only to refer to the western church exclusively." I think it refers to the eastern church exclusively: and the revivification predicted is yet to be experienced.

13. *And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*—At the same period a great revolution in civil government will occur, signified by an earthquake; and the tenth part of the city fell: that is, in consequence of the revolution, a tenth part of the empire changed its governmental character; and also, the names of seven thousand men were destroyed or taken away, as it should be read. These names pro-

bably refer to the dignities and titles with which they had been honored. Republican equality will be established. These wonderful events will make men feel, that God reigns, and will lead them to honor him as the sovereign ruler of nations, and the disposer of all things. The restoration of Christian believers to the enjoyment of their religious and civil rights, and the revival of primitive Christianity, will be a wonderful and convincing change. This is probably yet future.

14. *The second woe is past ; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.*—Here ends the Turkish and Mahometan dominion.

15. *And the seventh angel sounded ; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; and he shall reign forever and ever.*—This is the third woe-trumpet, and refers to the Roman papal church in the western portion of the empire. Before the revelator goes into the particulars included under it, he shows what will be the spiritual state of the world immediately subsequent to the overthrow of the Mahometan power. The kingdoms of the world will be Christ's, and his spiritual reign over the nations will be established. This of course brings us to the millennium. The eighteenth and nineteenth verses complete the view of the triumphs of Christianity, as more fully described toward the close of the book. In the nineteenth chapter a similar description is given of the state of things after the destruction of the papal dominion. In each series, that pertaining to the eastern or Mahometan power, and that which pertains to the western or Roman power, he carries forward his prophetic views to the millennium, or thousand years men-

tioned in the twentieth chapter. As these two antichrists arose about the same time, and each are to continue twelve hundred and sixty years, their overthrow will be nearly simultaneous. But we may suppose that both religions will continue feeble and waning for some years after their power and supremacy are destroyed.

When the seventh angel sounded there were *great voices in heaven*, that is, public acknowledgments, proclamations, and thanksgivings. The occasion for these will be, that the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; that is, subject to his benignant reign. This is the great spiritual change spoken of by the ancient prophets; and implies, that instead of the former despotic and oppressive governments, under which the Christian church had suffered so amazingly for ages, Christ would be acknowledged as the supreme Lawgiver and Sovereign; and that from that period, his divine precepts would become the principles for the government of men. It implies also, that Christianity will exert its appropriate influence in moulding their characters, and meliorating their condition. His reign was commenced long since; but now it will receive a new development, will be deeply and widely felt, and be thankfully acknowledged.

16 and 17. *And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God: Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come: because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.—* At this happy change, the twenty-four elders, who represent the church, and who SAT before God, implying the permanent enjoyment of his favor, worship him with profound reverence, and render thanks for the exercise of his power, and this new development of his benevolent reign. Simi-

lar adoration and praise is represented as being offered in other instances, when a special season of prosperity to the church is predicted as occurring. It will be at once perceived that this seventh trumpet extends over the whole period which is included under the seven vials which follow. It is called a woe-trumpet because it relates chiefly to the destruction of the papal power by a succession of divine judgments.

The *reign* of Christ which is mentioned here, is doubtless the same as that mentioned in the closing chapters of this book.

18. *And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints and them that fear thy name, small and great ; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.*—The amazing change which will take place, when the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdoms of Christ will produce great excitement, and probably strong opposition. *The nations will be angry* ; the wicked, the lovers of despotic power, and haters of true religion, will make great opposition to civil freedom and pure Christianity. But it will be unavailing, for then, the time of God's wrath is come,—the time in which he will overthrow oppression, bigotry, superstition, and idolatry. No artifice or power of man will then be able to prolong the existence of those evils.

*And the time of the dead, that they should be judged.* By *the dead* are not meant those whose natural life is extinct. The phrase is used figuratively, as is the *killing* of the witnesses, and signifies those who have been oppressed, deprived of civil and religious rights, held in a state of ignorance and debasement. Those who shall be in that condition of social and political death at the time meant,



will be *judged*, *i.e.*, vindicated,—their wrongs will be redressed and their rights secured. Then too will be given a recompense to the faithful ministers of Christ, called here as elsewhere, *prophets*, and to the saints, and all true Christians of every grade. That promised recompense is the enjoyment of the fruits of their labors, and the fulfillment of their desires in the prosperity of the cause they have loved and sustained.

The signification given above of the term, *judged*, is common in the Old Testament,—the same Greek word (*krino*) being used in the Septuagint, which is used here. Thus Ps. 67 : 4. Thou wilt *judge* the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth : literally, Thou wilt *rule* the people in equity and *guide* the nations, &c. Ps. 10 : 18. He *will judge* the fatherless and poor ; *i.e.*, will vindicate their rights and protect them. So, Ps. 43 : 1, Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation. Also, Ps. 110 : 6. He will *judge among* the heathen, &c. To judge among the heathen means in this instance to rule over them and execute justice in the midst of them. This will be done preeminently when the time shall draw near for the kingdoms of the world to become the Lord's. *The reference is not at all to the general judgment.*

In contrast with this, it is said The Lord will destroy them who destroy the earth. The term *earth* is used for those who inhabit it ; and the class of men who have despised, trodden down and held in debasement their fellow men, shall be despised, and no others like them shall afterwards be found.

19. *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament : and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*—We must remember, that all

these are scenes on earth, not in heaven. The temple of God represents the Christian church; and heaven is the civil government. The temple being open, as if for free access, signifies, that the privileges of the church will be accessible to all,—a free toleration will be allowed by the civil authorities;—all will enjoy religious liberty.

As a consequence of opening the temple, the ark of the covenant was seen. This is another evidence, that it is not the celestial heaven which is meant, for there is no temple with its ark there. *The whole reference is to the church on earth*, and the figures are drawn from the temple at Jerusalem. The ark stood in the inner apartment called the holy of holies; its top or lid was the mercy-seat, over which two cherubim spread their wings; and between these was a supernatural light, which was a symbol of the divine presence. Now, the opening of the temple, or withdrawing of the partition curtain, would give a full view of the ark and the divine glory above it. This may signify, that at the period intended, God will give a manifestation of himself to mankind more full than he has ever done before. That period, as I think, is that of the new heaven and new earth described in the twenty-first chapter, which follows the thousand years, and the destruction or conversion of the enemies of the church. It is there declared, that ‘the tabernacle of God will be with men, and he will dwell with them,—that they will be his people, and that he will be with them and be their God.’ Also, that ‘the throne of God and the Lamb will be with them, and they will see his face.’ That will be the period in which the church will attain to her highest earthly perfection.

Preparatory to this happy state of things, there will be great commotions, wars, overturnings, and signal judgments, symbolized by lightnings, voices, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail. Ch. 8 : 5. Isa. 28 : 17, where hail

is the emblem of special judgments and calamities. These also, if I mistake not, are described in the twentieth chapter, from the eleventh to the fifteenth verses. Before that most perfect moral and political state of the world, fitly distinguished as the new heaven and earth, there will be vigorous opposition to the controlling influence of pure religion, and there will be signal displays of God's kindness to his people, and of his displeasure against his enemies, figuratively represented by the appearance of a great shining throne.

Thus, as I have already remarked, John extends his prophetic description of the destruction of the eastern or Mahometan antichrist to the millennium, and then glances at the great events pertaining to the church far onward beyond that era of religious prosperity, even into that distant future period which Daniel says, is forever and ever.

Scott remarks, that this nineteenth verse "introduces a new subject, and should have been placed at the beginning of the next chapter." So far is this from being the fact, it is carrying out the series of events in the particular line which the apostle was tracing to the grand consummation. He follows up the overthrow of the Mahometan enemies of the Christian church with the far distant eradication from the world of all its enemies, and the full and permanent establishment of its peace and supremacy. In the subsequent chapters he takes up the Roman antichrist, traces its progress, depicts its overthrow, and carries the view onward through the millennium to the grand consummation in the new heaven and new earth.

## CHAPTER XII.

*The Triumph of Christianity over its Heathen Opposers in the Western Empire.—The Invasion of the Northern Barbarians.*

THE writer having traced the progress of the Mahometan Antichrist onward to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, commences the prediction of a series of events relating to the western or Roman Antichrist. That he might give a connected view of that great apostasy, he reverts to the time when the scepter of government was wrested from pagan, and held by Christian emperors. In this and the succeeding chapters, he foreshows the casting down of paganism from its long continued supremacy,—the rise of the papal hierarchy,—its progress to almost universal dominion,—its obscuration of the glory of the church,—its bloody persecutions, and its various fortunes to its final subversion, just previous to the millennium. By adopting the interpretation we have given of the preceding chapter, and observing the order of the visions now suggested, much confusion and perplexity is avoided, and the whole is seen to be consistent and harmonious.

1. *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven ; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.—A great sign or presage was seen in heaven, (this being the literal reading ;)—a presage of an important era of the church. Heaven, in this place, as in most others in this book, signifies the gov-*

ernment or ruling authority of the empire. This will be evident when it is ascertained what is meant by the woman and her son. A woman is the well-known emblem of the church. Being clothed with the sun signifies, that at the period designated, the church will be invested with *authority to rule*,—that she will shine forth from the heights of civil power, dispelling the darkness of heathenism, and that to her will be given a bright day of prosperity.

The Jews reckoned time, regulated their festivals, and determined particular seasons for religious purposes by the phases of the moon; and so, it is sometimes taken as the symbol of their ecclesiastical economy. In this respect the moon being under the feet of the woman, would indicate that that economy had been made subservient to her advancement to a more elevated state;—that she had risen above it, and was enjoying a brighter dispensation.

But, inasmuch as it was the general practice, even in the most enlightened nations, to worship the moon and to offer human and various other sacrifices to it, I prefer to regard this symbol, as signifying the triumph of the church over heathenism and idolatry. The Syrians worshiped the moon under the name of Astarte and Urania,—the Arabians, as Alilat,—the Egyptians as Isis,—the Greeks as Diana, Venus, &c., and even the Hebrews fell into this universal idolatry, and paid adoration to the moon as the queen of heaven, and the goddess of the groves. To be under the feet implies a state of subjection and degradation. At the period intended, the church, having risen to authority and supremacy in the empire, would put down paganism from its high places, and subject it to her control.

This interpretation is strengthened by the symbolic fact, that upon the head of the woman was a *crown* of twelve stars. A crown is always the emblem of regal authority. The twelve stars symbolize the twelve apostles. In

the first chapter the seven stars are declared to be the angels, *i.e.* ministers of the churches. The idea, then, is, that the church will possess regal authority in the empire, by means of the truths promulgated to the world by the twelve apostles to whom Christ committed the great work of teaching the nations. The effect would be the dejection and suppression of paganism. And thus it was, as the sequel will show.

2. *And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*—The time of her parturition being near, she was in great distress; showing that God was about to give her a deliverer, and that this would be preceded and attended with great trials. History shows, that this was precisely the state of affairs from the death of Constantius to the entire triumph of Christianity over its heathen enemies under the reign of Constantine, his son. See explanation of the fourth verse.

3. *And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*—Another sign or presage was exhibited in the symbolic heaven,—the government, to which attention is particularly directed. This was a *great red dragon* with seven crown-bearing heads, and ten horns. This hideous monster, resembling the fabulous hydra of the ancients, is a fit emblem of paganism in the Roman empire. A writer assigns as the reason for adopting “the dragon as the emblem of the empire in this case, that the dragon was the principal standard of the Romans next to the eagle in the second, third, fourth, and fifth centuries of the Christian era. Of this we have abundant evidence in the writings both of heathens and Christians.” Thus Daniel represents the Grecian kingdom by a he goat,

for the reason, as we suppose, that the figure of that animal was borne upon the military standards of that nation. Certain it is, that Daniel describes the Roman empire, as a beast dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong, having great iron teeth, and ten horns. John calls it a *great red dragon*;—*great*, as showing the extent and power of the empire,—and *red*, because red and scarlet distinguished the civil and military officers of the empire.

This dragon had seven heads with crowns upon them. The crown being the emblem of ruling authority, the seven crowned heads, mean the seven successive forms of government under which the empire has existed. These, in chapter 17 : 10, are called seven kings; the term kings being applied to any kind of rulers. The seven forms are enumerated thus,—“1. The regal power. 2. The consulate. 3. The dictatorship. 4. The decemvirate. 5. The military tribunes. 6. The triumvirate. 7. The imperial.

The dragon had also ten horns. A horn is an emblem of a nation or kingdom. The Roman empire comprised ten kingdoms, that is, all of Europe with the exception of the northern and eastern part of Russia. As the seven heads are the seven forms of government, and as the crowns were upon the heads, and not upon the horns, it is evident, that at the time intended, the supreme “power was still vested in the emperors and senate at Rome, and not as afterwards, in the monarchs of the ten kingdoms.”

4. *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*—Cruden says of the term *tail* in this passage, “It signifies the power, policy and flatteries by which the devil and his instruments corrupt and allure ministers of the church from their sim-

plicity and purity of doctrine, to error, superstition and profaneness." Teachers of false doctrines and pernicious errors are represented in scripture as being the tail. Thus in Isa. 9 : 14, 15, 'The Lord will cut off from Israel head and *tail*, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honorable, he is the head ; and the prophet, who teacheth lies, *he is the tail*.' In Isa. 19 : 15, the term tail means the idolatrous priests and necromancers of Egypt. Now as the dragon is the symbol of pagan government and pagan religion united, his tail represents the teachers and propagators of paganism, who infuse their degrading and polluting sentiments into the minds of men.

Stars are ministers and teachers of true religion ; or, if the reference be to civil matters, they mean distinguished men in the state. Here, doubtless, the stars are Christian ministers, and their being dragged along and cast to the earth means, either their being forcibly taken from their stations, deprived of their office, and reduced to the common level and occupations of men ; or, that they were induced by fear or favor to adopt heathen sentiments, and mingle heathen rites in Christian worship. All this was notoriously the fact. In the last half of the third century under the reign of Decius Trajan, a furious persecution was carried on against the church. Mosheim states that "in all the provinces of the empire, multitudes of Christians were, during the space of two years, put to death by the most horrid punishments. The most unhappy circumstance of all these cruelties was their fatal influence upon the faith and constancy of many of the sufferers ; for, a great number of Christians dismayed, not by the approach of death, but at the aspect of those dreadful and lingering torments which a barbarous magistracy had prepared to combat their constancy, *fell from the profession of their faith*, and secured themselves from punishment, either by



*offering sacrifices*, or by *burning incense* before the images of the gods, or by purchasing *certificates* from the pagan priests."

This, if I mistake not, is the fulfillment of what is predicted by the tail of the dragon drawing a third part of the stars, and casting them to the earth. Generally, by the term third part, John means a particular portion of the empire. In this instance it may mean a considerable indefinite portion of the stars. It should be observed, that the apostle in this description of the Roman Antichrist, goes back to its origin.

The dragon stood before the woman to destroy her child as soon as it was born. The following I regard as the explanation or rather fulfillment of this symbolic act. The father of Constantine was favorable to Christianity. This awakened the jealousy and fears of the heathen priests. Upon his death, A.D. 311, the army proclaimed his son Constantine, emperor, and the year following he was converted to the faith of Christ. Then began a terrible and bloody conflict between the Christian and heathen parties. Of the four præfects, Galerius and Diocletian were inveterate enemies of Christianity; and instigated by the heathen priests, they carried on a horrid persecution of Christians. Various attempts were made to destroy Constantine by engaging him in dangerous expeditions, and by endeavoring to excite the heathen against him. In this way did the dragon seek to devour the woman's child.

Furthermore, among the competitors for the throne was Maxentius, another steadfast assertor of paganism, who had possession of Rome. Constantine, as I have previously stated, immediately marched from France against that usurper, and entered Italy with a large army. Maxentius met him a little way from Rome; but though his force was much the largest, he was routed, and in his flight was

precipitated into the Tiber, and drowned. Galerius was seized with an extraordinary disease, and after languishing nearly a year in indescribable torments, expired.

Then Maximin, who governed in the east, meditated the destruction of Constantine and the seizure of the western part of the empire. To accomplish this, he marched with a numerous army against Licinius, who was friendly to Constantine, and was wholly defeated. Soon after, he died miserably "by a very extraordinary kind of madness."

Finally Licinius himself turned against Constantine, and contested his right to the throne at the head of a formidable army composed of the heathen party. Constantine's soldiers from the first were nearly all Christians. 'Previous to the battle, in the midst of his Christian bishops, he implored the assistance of God; and Licinius with the pagan priests interceded with the gods for help and victory. The cause of truth and religion triumphed. Constantine conquered. Soon, however, his antagonist collected another army, and was again defeated in a general engagement, and was pursued into Nicomedia, where he surrendered himself a prisoner, and was some time after put to death. In all this we see what amazing efforts the great red dragon made to destroy the woman's child as soon as it was born, as soon as he became a *Christian* and an *emperor*.

5. *And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*—It is truly surprising, that men of learning and biblical research, who have written large commentaries on this book, should have asserted, that this male child of the woman, the church, is Jesus Christ! This represents the writer as going back all of a sudden, and without any conceivable reason, to the commencement of the Christian era, and thus makes him a *historian of*

*the past*, instead of a prophet of the future; and this, too, when he had been distinctly informed, that these visions related to “things which must be hereafter;” 1 : 19 and 4 : 1. Besides, Jesus Christ is in no sense whatever the son of the symbolic woman, the church. So far from it is the fact, that the church owes its existence to him,—derived its origin from him, and from the first has been nourished and sustained by him. The church is called in the scriptures the Lamb’s wife, his spouse, his bride, but never his mother, nor he its Son.

The succeeding prediction, that he would rule *all nations with a rod of iron* is doubtless what has occasioned the above noticed misinterpretation. It is claimed, that there is a reference in this to Psalm 2 : 9, ‘Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, and shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.’ There is not the slightest evidence, that there is any reference to that passage,—a passage which clearly refers to Christ, but this as clearly does not.

In the original the word *nations*, has the Greek article before it, and therefore our translation should read, *all the nations*, that is, the nations of the empire. Even if we give to the phrase the broadest signification in which it is used in scripture, it will not alter the case, for at the time specified, the Roman empire embraced nearly the whole known world, and therefore, *the whole world* is a phrase repeatedly used in the new testament to signify that empire. Luke 2 : 1. Rom. 1 : 8. Rev. 13 : 3. Col. 1 : 6.

*Iron* is a metal distinguished for its strength; and a *rod of iron* is one that cannot easily be broken. Ruling with a *scepter* of iron, signifies the exercise of great authority and power,—an authority which could not be easily resisted or overthrown. Such was the authority of Constantine, when he repealed the oppressive laws against Christians, suppressed paganism, which had been the religion of the em-

pire from its origin, prohibited its idolatrous rites, and made Christianity triumphant, in spite of the efforts of heathen priests, philosophers, and magistrates.

This man-child was caught up to God and to his throne. This is another figure signifying the divine protection over him, and that God exalted him to rule for his church, and for his glory. In a subordinate sense, he made him a co-ruler and co-worker with him to promote the enlargement and welfare of Christ's kingdom. I have already noticed some of the great deliverances which God wrought for this first Christian emperor, beset as he was with snares and stratagems, and opposed by all the official influence and military force of the heathen portion of the empire.

6. *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*—Of all the opinions respecting the locality of the wilderness and the flight of the woman into it, that which maintains that the United States of America is the place, and the coming of the Puritans here is the event, is the most whimsical and absurd. And yet writers have seriously maintained this, as the true interpretation. This is making the apostolic seer to leap over a period of 1300 years, viz., from the settlement of Constantine in the empire about the year 313 to the landing of the Pilgrims here in 1620! Besides, John was informed, that the woman, the true church, should be nourished in the wilderness 1260 years, which being added to 1620, would make the time of her continuance there to extend to the year 2880, or 2862 of prophetic time, which would be through almost the whole period of the millennium!! So men let their fancies run loose upon the prophecies of this book. Instead of

this, we should make the analogy of the symbols, and the records of veritable history our guide.

Others think, that her flight into the wilderness signifies, that the church soon after its great prosperity and enlargement in the time of Constantine, fell into a maze of error and superstition, which brought upon it spiritual desolation. True, there was a great multiplication of rites and ceremonies,—an exhibition of splendor and of pride, and a consequent declension of spirituality, till at length, the foundations of papacy were laid firm and strong, and that monstrous structure, combining Judaism, heathenism, and Christianity, began to develop its vast proportions and its lofty pretensions.

But, surely, this falling into a state of superstition and declension, cannot be fitly represented by a flight to a place of security provided by God himself, where she is to be nourished for a long period *from the face of the serpent*. Instead of such a flight, it would have been a guilty yielding to the corrupting influence of the dragon, and a compliance with his wishes. Be it remembered, that it was the *sun-clad woman, the true church*, who fled into the wilderness, not that mass of nominal Christians, who became the degenerate Antichrist.

A careful attention to history shows this fact, that there has always been a portion of Christians, who have resisted all the corruptions of Christian doctrine and worship, which from century to century have been introduced; and they have been more or less persecuted. This has been the case from the very days of Constantine, when Pope Sylvester introduced his unwarrantable innovations, down to this time. Indeed, so early as the year 251 Novatian separated from the church because of its great depravity. “Great numbers,” says Mr. Robinson, “followed his example, and all over the empire *Puritan* churches were constituted and

flourished through the succeeding two hundred years. Afterward, when penal laws obliged them to lurk in corners, and worship God in private, they were distinguished by a variety of names, and *a succession of them continued till the Reformation.*" Another writer says, "The Novatians declared their community to be the only true church." Novatian was a pastor of a church formed by himself in the city of Rome, "which maintained no fellowship with the so called Catholic church."

The Novatians called themselves, Cathari, which means, The Pure or Puritans, and they were the pure of the church, or rather the pure church from the middle of the third century to the sixteenth, when their spirit produced the great reformation. It is the recorded acknowledgment of their enemies, that they maintained "the integrity of the true faith, together with the purity of discipline, and the power of godliness." "These Puritans, being exposed to severe and sanguinary persecutions for dissent, from age to age, were compelled to shelter themselves from the desolating storm in retirement; and when at intervals they re-appear on the page of cotemporary history, and their principles are propagated with new boldness and success, they are styled a new sect, and receive a new name, *though in reality they are the same people.*"\* They have been called Donatists, Luciferians, and in the east, Paulicians, where they flourished in the sixth and following centuries, and were the Protestants and Puritans under the Greek church. In the twelfth century the same class of Christians were called Waldenses, and in France they were called Albigenses, or the pure. Mr. Robinson shows that they were not called Waldenses from Peter Waldo, as has been supposed; but, they had that name, which signifies, *Inhabitants of the Valleys*, long before his time. It was applied to them, because

\* Rel. Enc. Novatians and also Waldenses.

being persecuted, "great numbers of them made their residence in the valleys of the Alps and of the Pyrenees, where, from age to age, they found an asylum from the tyranny of the church of Rome." Their own historians confirm this view. Dr. Allix, who is one of them, says, "For three hundred years or more, the bishops of Rome attempted to subjugate the church of Milan," (composed of this people) "and rather than own their jurisdiction, they retired to the valleys of Lucerne and Angrogne, and therefore were called, *Vallenses*, *Wallences*, or the *People of the Valleys*."

The testimony of Reinerius, a Catholic inquisitor, is so important concerning this people, that I here insert it. "Of all the sects which have been or now exist, none is more injurious to the church (that is of Rome) for three reasons: 1. Because *it is more ancient*. Some aver their existence from the time of Sylvester; others from the very time of the apostles. 2. Because it is so *universal*. There is scarcely any country into which this sect has not crept. And 3. Because all other heretics excite horror by the greatness of their blasphemies against God; but these have a great appearance of piety, as they live justly before men, believe rightly all things concerning God, and confess all the articles contained in the creed; only they hate and revile the church of Rome, and in their accusations are easily believed by the people." "Such a concession from such a source, speaks volumes."

This must suffice to show who those are, who composed the *true church* symbolized by the sun-clad woman wearing a crown of twelve stars; and what was her flight into the wilderness, and where that wilderness is. They are those who under different names, and in successive periods of time, nobly stood up in support of the truth, and for the original simplicity and purity of Christian worship in opposition to all admixtures of Judaism and heathenism,

and all usurpations of ecclesiastical power by the bishops and metropolitan churches. *These were the true church.* Its *flight into the wilderness from the face of the serpent*, (another name of the dragon under a Christian form) was the retreat of these godly believers into the mountain wilds, and northern countries of Europe, where it has been nourished since the rise of papacy in the early part of the seventh century, making a period of a thousand, two hundred and three score years.

7 and 8. *And there was war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven.*—Heaven means here, as in other places, the government or ruling power of the empire. War in heaven is the existence of civil commotions and bloody encounters between parties in the empire. The parties were the Christians and the pagans. The leaders were Constantine, and successive Christian emperors, with the Christian magistrates and ministers on one side; represented by Michael and his angels. The leaders on the other side were the heathen emperors, officers, and priests, represented by the dragon and his angels. A part of this war I have noticed in the remarks on the fourth verse. Though Constantine gave the supremacy to Christianity, the heathen portion of his subjects did not readily succumb; and the conflict went on through successive reigns, and was renewed by Julian the apostate, with great virulence on his accession to the imperial throne. But his reign was short, and his designs against Christianity were frustrated. His last words were, “O Galilean, thou hast conquered.”

The six emperors who succeeded him, professed Christianity, but their reigns were very brief, and heathenism re-



tained a strong hold in the empire. Theodosius the Great, was made emperor in the year 379, and “exerted himself in the most vigorous and effectual manner in the extirpation of the pagan superstitions throughout all the provinces, and enacted severe laws and penalties against such as adhered to them. His sons, Arcadius and Honorius, pursued with zeal, and not without success, the same end; so that toward the conclusion of the fourth century, the Gentile religions declined apace, and had also no prospect of recovering their primitive authority and splendor.”\* Thus the dragon *prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven*; that is, heathenism had no more control or share in the government of the empire. To understand this literally as a war in the celestial heaven, or, as a commentator of our own country thinks, “in the upper regions of the atmosphere,” between the good and bad angels, is entirely foreign to John’s purpose, and is intrinsically absurd. Besides, in the song of praise for this victory which is given in the tenth verse, these Christian combatants are called, *our brethren*, and what is entirely decisive against such a *celestial* fight, it is declared in the eleventh verse, that ‘*they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.*’ This is positive evidence, that this is the conflict of the church on earth made successful by faith in Jesus Christ and the doctrines of the cross.

Further still, “Constantine himself, and others of his time, describe these events under the same image of dethroning the dragon.” Bishop Newton states, that “a picture of Constantine was set up over the palace gate, with a cross over his head; and under his feet the great enemy of mankind, (who persecuted the church by means of impious tyrants) in the form of a dragon, transfixed

\* Mosheim, Vol. 1, p. 259.

with a dart through the midst of its body, and falling headlong into the depths of the sea." "This," says Dr. Scott, "shows how Christians then understood the prophecy ; and no doubt they rightly interpreted it."

9. *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world ; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*—Here the four descriptive names of the heathen, persecuting Roman power are brought together, as they are again in the second verse of the twentieth chapter. It is called the *dragon* to mark its *paganism*, the dragon being a fabulous creature of the heathen. It is called *the old serpent* from the fact asserted, that it *deceiveth the whole world*, and its cunning devices and persecuting opposition to Christianity. This heathen power is styled the *devil*, because of its false accusations, foul calumny, and ceaseless vituperation of sincere believers, by which means vast numbers of them were destroyed. The devil is a liar and a murderer from the beginning. And it is called *Satan*, which means an adversary, because of its unappeasable hostility to Christianity. These titles are used descriptively, and as personifications of heathenism connected with a great ruling civil power, viz: the Roman. And yet the common idea, and one which is maintained by distinguished writers, is, that the great fallen angel, who is known by these names, who deceived our first parents, and is the god of this world, is what is meant in these prophetic visions. This is making it out on the authority of the inspired revelator, that the prince of darkness has seven heads and ten horns, and a tail so long and so strong, that at some time or other, it has swept down from their orbits a third part of the stars of heaven ! To such absurdities have good men been carried by not observing, that everything almost in this book

is symbolical, and that the first business in obtaining an understanding of it, is to interpret the symbols.

The dragon, the emblem of heathenism, as a ruling power was cast out, ejected from the heaven of government, and thrust to the earth, degraded from all places of influence and power, and driven into obscurity: and "*his angels*," heathen officers, priests, and philosophers, shared the same fate. This great work, begun and carried far onward by Constantine, may be considered as completed by his successors, as previously shown.

To convince any doubting mind, that the explanation now given is correct, I will present positive evidence furnished by that very time, and *by Constantine himself*, on coins and medals, which he caused to be struck. I find it in a work on the apocalypse by our countryman, James Winthrop. 'Constantine adopted for his emblems those of Apollo or the sun. He issued a coin on which was the figure of *a woman with wings* in a sitting posture, denoting a state of rest, and the moon under her feet. He also upon a medal surrounded his own head with the twelve signs of the zodiac. We have also a coin of his, on which the dragon is represented lying at the foot of his new standard, which was the cross. This probably refers to the translation of the empire from heathenism to Christianity in the twentieth year of his reign, A.D. 326.' This shows that Constantine and the Christians of his day understood this twelfth chapter as predicting the very scenes in which they lived, and in which they bore a part.

And furthermore, "Constantine himself in an epistle to Eusebius and other bishops, concerning the rebuilding and repairing of the churches, saith that, 'Liberty being now restored, and the *dragon* being now removed from the administration of public affairs, by the providence of the

great God, and by my ministry ; I esteem the great power of God to have been made manifest to all.’ ”

10. *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ : for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*—A song of triumph was heard in the heaven of government, as the above words of the first Christian emperor show, for the suppression of heathenism and the victory of Christianity. It was felt and declared by all who were friendly to the change, and shared in the administration of public affairs, that *salvation* had come to the hitherto oppressed people of God ; and *strength* had been given to them against their enemies ; and that the *kingdom* or reign of God is come ; and *the power* of Christ has been manifested, *the power* of his spirit and his truth by which he subdues mankind to himself. The heathen priests and people were continually, day and night, accusing Christians of all manner of crimes, which they had not committed, to procure the infliction of cruel punishments, and to effect their destruction. But now they were cast down ; their power and influence taken from them, so that they could prosecute this fiendish work no longer.

11. *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony ; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*—This shows the *manner* in which this conquest was achieved. *They*, the believing brethren mentioned above, *overcame* their heathen enemies by a firm belief in Christ as their Redeemer ; by his truth which they maintained and disseminated, and by their unflinching adherence to his cause at all hazards, even that of life. A

lesson which Christians of this age need to learn and practice.

12. *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*—For this glorious victory, let all the governments in all the provinces of the empire, and all connected with them in the administration of public affairs, rejoice, and give thanks to God.

Immediately following this exhortation to rejoice, is the utterance of a *woe*, which seems very strange, but is fully illustrated by the facts of history ; and we see in all this, how precisely the secrets of great events are foreshown in these visions. The heathen priests, officers and people, seeing the worship of their gods forbidden, and themselves deprived of office and influence, were extremely exasperated, and made desperate attempts to regain their ascendancy. When the Goths and other warlike nations of the north invaded the empire, the pagans instigated them to treat with severity and violence the followers of Christ ; and they improved every opportunity of exciting against them the hatred of those fierce invaders. Everywhere too, they represented that these calamities under which the empire was suffering, were all owing to the introduction of Christianity, and were expressions of indignation of the gods, whose worship had been prohibited. Gibbon says, “The surprise of the pagans was soon succeeded by resentment ; and the most pious of men were exposed to the unjust but dangerous imputation of impiety. Malice and prejudice concurred in representing the Christians as a society of atheists, who by a most daring attack on the religious constitution of the empire, had merited the severest animad-

version of the civil magistrate. They were described as the most wicked of mankind." Thus the demon of paganism came down with great wrath, and the more so, because he perceived that his time was short. The inhabitants of the Roman earth and those upon the islands of the sea, were those to whom this woe particularly referred.

13. *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.*—This casting down of the dragon from influence and power, with no prospect of regaining it, caused him to adopt other methods of persecuting the church which are disclosed in the following chapters.

14. *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and a half a time, from the face of the serpent.*—This flight of the woman is probably the same as that mentioned in the sixth verse, and the time of her continuance in the wilderness is the same, though stated in a different manner. A *time* is one year, *times* are two years, and the *half time* is half a year, making in all three years and a half. In prophetic reckoning these comprise twelve hundred and sixty days. See the explanation given above, of the sixth verse.

15. *And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.*—A *flood* is used figuratively by the ancient prophets to signify the invasion of a country by numerous armies. Thus in Isa. 8 : 7, it is written, The Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory. Also, 28 : 2. In Jer. 46 : 7, 8, it is asked, *Who* is this

that cometh up as a flood, &c. ? The flood poured out to sweep away the woman, was probably the invasion of the empire by the Goths, Suevi, Alans, and Vandals, who poured down upon the southern provinces from the north like an overflowing flood. They were pagans and were encouraged to make this invasion by the pagans in the empire, with the intention thus of destroying the predominant influence of the church. How true to fact is John's symbolic representation !

16. *And the earth helped the woman: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.*—The earth sometimes means a territorial domain, and sometimes the common people. *The flood*, which was the northern hordes, was *swallowed up* by the earth. Those barbarians instead of overrunning the countries, and then retiring to their native land with the spoils of conquest, as invaders usually do, settled down and became absorbed in the mass of the population. And instead of continuing pagans, and helping to destroy Christianity, they embraced it, and seemed proud of adopting the laws, manners, and usages of the Romans. Gibbon says, ‘that the warlike barbarians of Scythia and Germany, embraced the religion of the Romans.’ He adds: “During the same period, Christianity was embraced by almost all the barbarians who established their kingdoms on the ruins of the western empire; the Burgundians in Gaul, the Suevi in Spain, the Vandals in Africa, the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and the various bands of mercenaries who raised Odoacer to the throne of Italy.” Mosheim gives the same testimony to this fact. Thus did the earth help the woman, the church, by swallowing up the flood, which was poured out by the dragon to sweep her away.

17. *And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*—Foiled in this endeavor to destroy the church by the force of heathenism, he goes to vent his enmity in another manner against the believing and obedient followers of Christ. He laid aside his pagan character, and assumed the Christian. He enters the church, becomes mighty zealous to increase its splendor and resources, to multiply its privileges, and extend its boundaries. He goes to work to corrupt its worship, to destroy its spirituality, and make it a worldly church, or rather, no church at all. In other words, he sets about rearing up within itself the great papal Antichrist, whose rise, dominion, despotism, bloody persecution, and final destruction, are the prophetic burden of the following chapters to the twentieth.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

*The Roman Government as professedly Christian.  
Rise of Papacy.*

1. *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.*—A dragon is a fabulous creature, a fiction of the heathen, worshiped by the heathen, and therefore a suitable symbol of heathenism, or of the pagan Roman empire, as in the preceding chapter. The *wild beast* described in this chapter, is the same empire, as *Christian*; but though nominally Christian, a persecuting power, re-



taining many of its former traits, The seven heads of the great red dragon had on them seven crowns, indicating seven forms of government under which the empire existed. The beast has seven heads, and instead of seven crowns, he has on them the name of blasphemy; showing that Rome itself is meant, being built on seven hills. This explanation is given by John in the seventeenth chapter, where Rome, as the seat of papacy, is represented by a lewd woman, sitting on a scarlet colored beast, which had seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads are declared to be "*seven mountains on which the woman sitteth.*" Another difference in the two descriptions, showing the appropriateness of each, is, that the ten horns of the pagan dragon have no crowns; but the ten horns of the papal beast have crowns; showing the fact that at one period there were ten *provinces*, and that afterward, they became *separate kingdoms*, still retaining a sort of connection with the empire. Upon the seven heads of the beast was the name of blasphemy. Rome assumed the name of 'Eternal City,' 'the Goddess of the Earth,' and was, and is, the great center of heathenized Christianity.

John seemed to himself to be standing on the shore and saw this beast rise up out of the sea, signifying, that this state of the empire was to come into being out of great commotions and changes, of which the sea is an emblem.

2. *And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.*—In this verse we have the complex character of the empire. Daniel saw four beasts rise from the sea, the first was like a lion, representing the Chaldean empire; the second was like a bear, emblematic of the Medo-Persian; the third was like a leopard, em-

blematic of the Grecian ; the fourth was dreadful and terrible, and exceedingly strong, and had ten horns. This was the Roman. John attributes the distinguishing properties of the first three to the Roman wild beast which arose out of the sea.

Furthermore, the dragon gave the beast his power, and seat, and great authority,—transferred it to him ; by which we are to understand, that the empire after it became professedly Christian, retained the same despotic, cruel, persecuting character, and the same center or capital, and the same pretensions to universal rule, as when it was heathen. Instead of the old idolatry of gods and goddesses, a new idolatry was introduced, equally gross, and more abominable, viz : the worship of images, crucifixes, relics, saints, and the virgin Mary. The devil still kept alive the spirit of heathenism, only changing the objects to be venerated and worshiped. The design of this amazing corruption of Christianity was to conciliate the heathen and make them pleased with what was presented to them as the religion of the gospel.

3. *And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death ; and his deadly wound was healed : and all the world wondered after the beast.*—The heads mentioned in this verse are the seven on which were crowns, meaning the seven forms of government under which the empire had existed. Five of these had passed away when John wrote this book, viz : the monarchical, the consular, the dictatorship, the decemvirate, and the military tribune. The sixth was the *imperial*, or that of the Casars, which was in existence in the time of Christ and the apostles. It was the sixth which received the deadly wound. This was inflicted by Odoacer, king of the Heruli, and by Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, who soon conquered Odoacer, and established the kingdom of

the Ostrogoths in Italy, which, as we are informed in the seventeenth chapter, ‘would continue but a *short space*.’ It continued about eighty years. Augustulus, the last emperor, abdicated the throne, and Odoacer assumed the title of king of all Italy, and extinguished the title of emperor of the west. This was the fall of the western Roman empire, *the wounding to death* of the sixth head or form of government about the year 476.

*His deadly wound was healed.* In A.D. 754 Pepin, king of France, marched into Italy, defeated the Lombard king, and obliged him to deliver up to the See of Rome, the Exarchate of Ravenna, Pentapolis, and all he had seized, and this it was which made the *bishop of Rome a temporal prince*. In 774 Charlemagne, son of Pepin, at the solicitation of Pope Adrian I, crossed the Alps with a great army, overturned the empire of the Lombards, confirmed the grant of his father to the pontiff, and added to it several cities and provinces in Italy. To reward him for this, the pontiff gave him the name of Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, and acknowledged him *emperor of Rome and the west*. Thus, the deadly wound was healed, the imperial form of government was restored. The civil and ecclesiastical power was united in the pope, and the Roman government became formidable again; and all the world, that is, all the people of the land, wondered after the beast, were astonished at the revival of the empire, which had for three hundred years been in a fallen condition.

4. *And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast : and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?*—The people regarded with superstitious reverence the pagan power, which had been transferred to the papal government; and they bowed with deference to this newly revived im-

perial authority, which was thus enlisted in the support of the temporal and spiritual power of Rome.

5 and 6. *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies: and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*—From this time the influence of the pope and the Romish church became the moving spring of the civil government, so that its enactments and operations were either dictated by that lordly pontiff, or in accordance with his wishes. The beast was permitted to arrogate to itself pompous titles, to make high pretensions to universal dominion, and to issue cruel and despotic edicts against its opponents.

Blasphemy against God is the utterance of impious language concerning him, or attributing to him purposes and acts which are dishonorable to him. It is speaking reproachfully and calumniously of him, or of other objects and persons.

The unjust and murderous edicts issued against Christians ‘in the name of God,’ and by the ‘grace of God,’ making him as it were the indorser and approver of those wicked acts, and the assumption of sacred titles and epithets, sufficiently illustrate the correctness of this prophetic description. The *tabernacle* of God was also blasphemed. The church is the house or temple in which God dwells; and this has been blasphemed, by the false accusations, denunciations, and excommunications of all who do not submit to the domination of this papal beast, and those especially who resist his usurpations and stand up in support of a pure religion. To this day they are branded with the name of heretics; religious intercourse with them is scru-

pulously avoided, and it is denied that their churches are the churches of Christ.

Those who dwell in heaven are subjected to the same calumny and abuse. By mistaking the meaning of the term, *heaven*, as John uses it, interpreters have considered this as referring to the angels and glorified saints. But, how they have been blasphemed by being unduly honored, is difficult to show. The fact is, that John is not discoursing about the celestial world, but is predicting events pertaining to the church in this world. The term *heaven* is used figuratively to signify either the civil or ecclesiastical government; and those who *dwell in heaven* are the permanent officers of the government or of the church. When it is considered what condemnatory edicts have been issued, what vast numbers have been deposed from office and influence, deprived of their rights, and shut up in prison; what wars and massacres have been occasioned by the papal beast against those who abjured its sentiments, and resisted its usurpations, whether in the church or the state, we can perceive the force of the expression under consideration.

7. *And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them : and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*—The papal beast, or Latin empire has made war against the saints for many centuries, and the number of its victims has swelled to an appalling amount. Mede estimates “from good authorities, that in the war with the Albigenses and Waldenses, there perished in France alone *a million*. From the first institution of the Jesuits to the year 1580, a little more than 30 years, nine hundred thousand orthodox Christians were slain by the common executioner. In the space of about thirty years the inquisition destroyed, by various

kinds of torture, a hundred and fifty thousand Christians. Sanders himself confesses that an innumerable multitude of Lollards and Sacramentarians were burnt throughout all Europe, not, as he says, by the pope and bishops, but by the civil magistrates." The controlling power of the beast extended over all the nations which composed the empire, *i.e.*, the whole Christian world.

8. *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*—All who dwell in the territories of the empire, will come into subjection to this secular beast, animated by the spirit of papacy:—all whose names as true believers, are not enrolled in the Lamb's book of life. This shows clearly what is the character of those who revere and uphold the idolatrous system of papacy.

9. *If any man have an ear, let him hear.*—Let every reader carefully attend to these things.

10. *He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*—A righteous retribution is foreshown, which will be similar in its nature to the evils which this murderous power has inflicted on others. It will be subjected to a state of captivity, and be destroyed by the sword. Through all these long-continued troubles, the patience and faith of the saints would be greatly tried, and gloriously manifested. Truly thus it has been.

11. *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a*

*dragon*.—Here is presented still another beast, which is the Roman hierarchy itself. Instead of rising from the sea of civil war and commotion, it *comes up out of the earth*,—it grows out of the ignorance and superstition of the common people, gradually and almost imperceptibly. It has *two horns like a lamb*. A horn is an emblem of power. Some have considered these two horns to be the *regular* and *secular* clergy; but this seems to me to be a distinction of too small importance. Daubuz explains the two horns as meaning “the successive lines of the bishops of Rome and Constantinople.” But the apostle is evidently speaking of *one* ecclesiastical power, and not of *two* separate and distinct, as are the Roman and Greek hierarchies. I prefer therefore, to consider the two horns as the civil and ecclesiastical authority united in the pope.

This beast appeared like a lamb, in reference to Christ, the Lamb of God, meek and mild. The pope assumes that he is the vicar, or representative of Christ, the head of the church, the bishop of the faithful. But his character and his acts give the lie to these pretensions: For *he speaks like a dragon*. His claims to universal authority, his imperious commands, his denunciations, and decrees, manifest all the tyranny and cruelty of the persecuting heathen emperors. Indeed, papacy is little else than Christianized heathenism.

12. *And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed*.—The papal hierarchy exercises all the power of the first beast, the secular Latin empire. At first the ecclesiastical authority was subject to the civil,—but, by a gradual process, the authority of the pope became supreme. He is

both a temporal and spiritual prince, and has claimed the right of dominion over all Christian sovereigns.

He causes the people of the Latin empire to submit to and reverence the civil, imperial power, which was overthrown and afterward revived in the person of Charlemagne. Here we see the first and second beast exercising dominion together over the same earth or territory; one is the secular, the other the spiritual power, clearly *showing*, that these are the two horns. These being on the head of the second beast, exhibits the fact, that the spiritual power became supreme; or rather, that both were exercised by the hierarchy. This is done *before the first beast, i.e.,* in his presence.

13. *And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.*—These wonders or proofs of the great power and sanctity of the papal church, are numberless fictitious miracles, which have been, and still are exhibited by the priests; the claim to the power of forgiving sins, granting indulgences, sending to purgatory, or releasing from it; and those successful methods of making people believe the most absurd legends, and naked falsehoods, even that the wafer is changed into the real body of Christ.

He maketh fire come down from heaven, *i.e.,* from the civil government on the people of the land, who dare to resist his authority and reject his false doctrines. Fire is often used in scripture to signify the anger or indignation of God or men, which destroys those who are the subjects of it. Here it means church censures, bulls of excommunication, and damnatory sentences. The ecclesiastical courts try the cases of alleged heresy, and pass sentence, but the civil magistrates must execute it. He makes the consuming fire come *down from heaven*, by compelling the *civil*



*authority* to put to death those whom he condemns. This is done *in the sight of men* ; i.e., these censures, excommunications, and sentences are read in all the churches, and the greatest publicity given to the whole matter.

14. *And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*—The first beast represents the civil authority or ruling power of the Latin empire. To make an image of him is to invest another with that power. The people were persuaded to confer that power on the pope, to invest him with imperial authority. The pope was made a temporal prince,—he exercises the power of an emperor,—levies taxes, raises armies, makes war, negotiates treaties, and does all other acts of a civil ruler. The deceived people have thus been induced to make an image of the secular beast, or to consent to the doing of it.

15. *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*—The papacy had power to give life to this image of imperial authority, that is, to impart life and efficiency to it, so that it should actually exert civil authority, and not be a dumb and lifeless image, incapable of doing anything. It should speak,—give forth proclamations, interdicts, and commands; and also cause all who would not submit to and reverence this usurped authority to be put to death. In the thirteenth century, says Dr. Mosheim, “the popes inculcated that pernicious maxim, that the bishop of Rome is *the supreme lord of the universe* ; and that neither princes nor bishops, civil governors nor ecclesiastical rulers,

have any lawful power in church or state but what they derive from him." He has dethroned sovereigns, disposed of crowns, absolved subjects from obedience due, and laid kingdoms under interdicts. Indeed the tyranny of the papal hierarchy has been fully equal to that of its imperial prototype.

16 and 17. *And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*—In the fourteenth chapter we are informed that this mark is *the mark of his name*.—the name of the beast. 'That name is the *Latin empire*;—the *mark* of his name must then be the *Latin worship*; for this reason, that it is the two-horned beast, the papacy, which causes all descriptions of persons to receive it.' 'The Latin worship is the universal badge of distinction of the Latin church from all other churches on the face of the earth;' and is therefore an infallible *mark* by which a genuine papist can be distinguished from all the rest of mankind.

This mark is received in the *right hand* or on the *forehead*. The right hand is a phrase used in the sacred scriptures to signify physical strength or power. To receive the mark of the beast in the right hand, means then, that the persons, who receive it, are under obligations to employ all their mental and physical powers to uphold and extend the Latin worship,—in other words, the Latin church.—The mark on the forehead signifies an open profession of the Latin faith and worship. 'Some may make such a profession, who do not devote themselves actively to promote the papal cause, hence the propriety of the expression, receiving the mark in the right hand or on the forehead.'

In papal countries without this mark of fidelity to the

papal church, a man is not allowed to buy or sell, or have the common privileges of a citizen. "So the canon of the council of Lateran, made against the Waldenses and Albigenses, enjoins upon pain of anathema, that no man presume to entertain or cherish them in his house or land, or exercise traffic with them." The Synod of Tours in France made a similar enactment. "In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the severity against the excommunicated was carried to such a pitch, that nobody might come near them, not even their wives, children, or servants; they forfeited all their legal rights and privileges, and were excluded from all kinds of offices."

A critical writer, quoted by Dr. Clarke, has shown, that the *name of the beast* is "The Latin Kingdom," and that this is applied in this place to the secular power. The *number of his name* is also "The Latin Kingdom," and is intended here for the papacy itself or the spiritual power.

18. *Here is wisdom.* "Let him who hath a mind for investigations of this kind find out a kingdom which contains precisely the number 666; for this must be infallibly the name of the beast." Before figures were invented, numbers were written with the letters of the alphabet. Now the Greek letters which form the words, *Ἡ Λατινὴ Βασιλεία*,—The Latin Kingdom, make just the number 666. Letters and figures may be combined to a great extent; but no other name of a kingdom can be found, that contains in the aggregate of its numerical letters, the number 666.

H = 8	The
Λ = 30	
α = 1	
τ = 300	Latin
ι = 10	
ν = 50	
η = 8	
B = 2	
α = 1	
σ = 200	Kingdom.
ι = 10	
λ = 30	
ε = 5	
ι = 10	
α = 1	
<hr/>	
666	

## CHAPTER XIV.

*The Reformation.*

THE prediction concerning the papal civil power and the papal ecclesiastical power in the former chapter, is followed with a prophetic announcement of the Reformation and the fall of that hierarchy.

1. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*—In continuation of the visionary representation, John saw a Lamb, the emblem of Christ, standing on Mount Zion, an eminence in Jerusalem, captured and fortified by David, indicating here, that the church was to take an elevated

position, and be defended by the power of its king. With him, as his believing people, was a company consisting of an hundred and forty and four thousand persons, being a definite number used for an indefinite. This number may have a reference to the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles. Clarke understands this company to be "those who were converted to Christianity from among the Jews." But, John has advanced many centuries in his prophetic course from the apostolic period of Christianity. They are those true-hearted believers, who came out from that corrupt and blasphemous community just described, and took an elevated stand with Christ on the Mount Zion of pure Christianity. See Heb. 12 : 22. They were distinguished by having the name of the Father written on their foreheads, which is a figurative expression signifying a moral resemblance to him, and an open acknowledgment of their relation to him as his people. As the followers of the papal beast had his mark in their right hands and in their foreheads ; so the followers of the Lamb have their distinctive mark, and openly declare that they are his.

2. *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder ; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.*—A voice from heaven in a civil sense is the proclamation of the will of the government ;—in an ecclesiastical sense, it is the publication by the church of the will of the Lord,—the promulgation of his truth. This voice being like the sound of many waters, and of a great thunder, signifies, that at the period referred to, which as I think, is that of the great Reformation, there would be a bold, awakening, and extensive promulgation of the truths of the gospel. The preaching of the reformers aroused all Europe ; astonished, convinced,

and led to Christ great multitudes, and excited the persecuting rage of the papal hierarchy. John the Baptist called himself the *voice of one crying in the wilderness*, and his preaching prepared the way for the introduction of a new dispensation. So the preaching of such men as Wickliff, Huss, Jerome, Luther, Zuinglius, and Melancthon, was like mighty thunder to the consciences of self-deceived and hypocritical formalists, whether dignitaries in the church, or fellows of the monastic orders, or those who move in common walks of life: and it introduced a new era of light, and purity, and prosperity to the Christian church.

There was also the *sound* of harpers singing as they played upon their harps. The harp was used in offering praise to God; and the idea expressed here probably is, that the labors of those godly men and the happy effects produced by them, occasioned much thanksgiving to God.

3. *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*—The song which the harpers sung, was in some respects peculiar, for it could not be learned by any except true believers, represented by the hundred and forty and four thousand, who were redeemed from the earth, *i.e.*, purified from the evil sentiments and practices which everywhere prevailed. The nature and efficacy of redemption by Christ,—the sufficiency of his atonement and righteousness to meet all the demands of the law,—and justification by faith in this alone, were the great awakening and renovating doctrines, which began and carried forward the reformation, and are essential to a living and life-producing Christianity. These stand in direct opposition to a religion of forms, of fantastic parade, and of meritorious dead works.

The blind devotees of superstitious observances do not understand this. Indeed the doctrine of justification by faith, is a fatal antagonist to the whole system of the Roman catholic and Greek catholic church. Hence the declared fact that no man could learn the new song of the harpers, beside true believers. They only have the experience of these truths, and a sense of their glory and excellency. These rejoicing minstrels sang their new song, commemorative of these new triumphs of the gospel before the throne, the emblem of civil authority, *i.e.*, in the presence of civil rulers, showing their acquiescence in and approval of this great reformation in religion, which was remarkably fulfilled in the favor which was shown by the German princes, electors, and others in Netherlands and Great Britain; and in the presence of the four living creatures and the elders, who are the representatives of the true church and its ministers. To all the friends of Christ, and lovers of his truth, this revival of true religion was an occasion of great rejoicing.

4. *These are they which were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.*—The character of this great company of believers is further described as those who were not defiled with women, being chaste and pure. It is common in the scriptures to represent the union between God and his people by the marriage relation, and defection from his worship to the worship of false Gods, as lewdness and adultery. To his ancient people, he said, Turn, O backsliding children, for I *am married* unto you. Jer. 3 : 14. *Thy Maker is thy husband.* Isa. 54 : 5. Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying, I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a

chaste virgin to Christ. 2 Cor. 11 : 2. As antithetical to this, we have the expressions, committing fornication, *i.e.*, by practicing idolatry;—playing the harlot,—going after lovers, denoting the sin of grossly corrupting the worship of God. The women of the Moabites seduced the Hebrews into the worship of their gods, and so the practice of idolatry in any form is spoken of as lewdness or conjugal infidelity. The affirmation, then, that the believers referred to, were not defiled with women, means that they kept themselves pure from the idolatrous practices of a degenerate church.

Another high commendation of them is, that *they follow the Lamb wherever he goes*, which expresses cheerful obedience to him, and an imitation of his example under all circumstances, whether joyous or afflictive. They performed duty in the exercise of faith, self-denial and patience.—They were *redeemed from among men*, in that they were delivered from the bondage of sin, and from the condemnatory sentence of the law.—They were *first fruits*, precious and sacred to the Lord,—the first fruits of that great spiritual harvest which followed the labors of those zealous reformers.

5. *And in their mouth was found no guile : for they are without fault before the throne of God.*—They were true to their vows, faithful in maintaining divine truth. Being *without fault*, does not mean, that they were sinless, but that through Jesus Christ, they were justified fully and freely, and lived as becometh saints. Though eminent in holiness, they needed mercy and forgiveness. This whole description may well be applied to the Waldenses and Albigenses, for they preserved the Christian religion pure, while the Romish church everywhere practiced the worship of images, relics, saints, and the blessed virgin. They were



never seduced by flattery, nor by a long and bloody persecution, in which more than a million of them lost their lives, to adopt the superstitions, or to practice the idolatry of the times. They followed the Lamb by a conscientious obedience to the gospel, often under circumstances awfully trying.

6. *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.*—This angel seems to be emblematic of those faithful preachers of the gospel, whose labors carried forward the reformation in different parts of Europe. His flying in the midst of heaven, shows the rapidity with which the truth would be disseminated. The everlasting gospel, in contradistinction to prevailing errors and superstitions, was to be preached to them who dwelt in the empire, and to people of all nations. The work so nobly begun by the reformers, is still carried on by various instrumentalities with increasing success.

7. *Saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him ; for the hour of his judgment is come ; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*—The angel proclaimed as he went, saying, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come, that is, his judgment on the papal hierarchy. Then God would begin to destroy the man of sin with the breath of his mouth, the truth of his own revealing. Instead of fearing the persecuting wrath of the pope, the people were exhorted to fear God;—and instead of the idolatrous worship of images, saints, and the virgin, they were to praise, adore, and serve him, who made all things, and controls all human interests.

8. *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*—Another angel followed announcing the fall of the Roman papal power, symbolized by ancient Babylon, which was long the grand center of idolatry, superstition, and oppression of God's people. The reformers boldly declared papacy to be antichrist, and proclaimed its overthrow, and ultimate extinction. The reason for this threatened destruction is, that this mystical Babylon had caused all nations to drink her poisonous draught,—the wine of the wrath of her fornication. Mingling of idolatrous rites with the worship of God, and thus corrupting true religion, is called fornication. The phrase, *wine of wrath* or *wrathful wine*, when used in reference to providential calamities, signifies the terrible effects of God's wrath on the nations who receive and practice the superstitions and idolatries of papal Rome. Thus in Jeremiah 25 : 15–18, it is written, “Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, saith the Lord, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and enraged, because of the sword that I will send among them,” &c.

This prophecy of John teaches us, that the preaching of the everlasting gospel to all nations, is to precede the final destruction of papacy, and will be the chief means of bringing to pass that event.

9 and 10. *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the*

*Lamb.*—A third angel followed loudly proclaiming divine vengeance on those who reverence, approve, admire, and obey the persecuting civil power, and his image, the papal hierarchy. At the destined period, his vengeance upon them will be unmitigated, terrible, irresistible. The wine of his indignation, which he will give those nations, will be undiluted,—it will prostrate their strength, and they will reel to and fro, and fall like a drunken man.

Another part of the punishment threatened against those who reverence the beast and his image and profess attachment and obedience to them, is, that they shall *be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and of the Lamb.* This is generally interpreted to mean the punishment to be inflicted in the future state. Now, we should observe, that the revelator is speaking of things which were to take place in this world, and, as in the preceding verses, of the punitive judgments, which God will bring on those who corrupt the church by their inventions, superstitions, and idolatries. Daniel speaks of this same punishment, in these words,—‘The judgment will sit, and they shall take away his dominion *to consume and destroy it unto the end.*’ What John expresses by being tormented with fire and sulphur, Daniel expresses by consuming and destroying the dominion or reign of the beast. Paul says the same, thus, ‘whom the Lord will consume with the breath of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming,’ *i.e.*, with his truth, and with signal dispensations of his providence.—God himself calls his truth, *fire*. Is not my word like fire? Jer. 23 : 29. See also Isa. 66 : 15. Paul says, ‘Every man’s work shall be made manifest—because it shall be made known by *fire*, and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.’ This is the fire of divine truth, and perhaps also, of persecution.

Sulphur, called also brimstone, is a highly inflammable

substance, and in scripture is used figuratively to signify the destructive nature and terribleness of divine judgments. In Genesis, it is recorded, that the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire out of heaven. Hence, in the Psalms it is said figuratively,—‘ Upon the wicked the Lord will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest.’ In the 38th chap. of Ezekiel, God declares his judgment against Gog thus,—I will plead against him with pestilence and blood, and I will rain upon him and his bands, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. John, in this instance, as in others, uses the figures of the Old Testament writers, and doubtless in the same sense. His idea is, that the worshipers and favorers of the beast and the papacy, will be troubled, alarmed, vexed, and conscience-smitten, with the truth which they hate, and which they fear will work the destruction of their delusive system ; and also, they will be visited with grievous and destructive calamities. These things will take place in presence of the holy angels, the messengers of the Lord, and in presence of the Lamb ;—i.e., with their approbation, as justly merited.

11. *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever : and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*—These figures are frequent in the writings of the ancient prophets, and it is strange, that their meaning and application in this place have been so erroneously explained. The fact is too generally overlooked, that this is a book of prophecy, and not of doctrinal instruction. It may be regarded as an expansion of those ancient prophecies, which relate to the Christian dispensation. It does not appear to me to be any part of the design of the writer to teach in these verses the eternal punishment of the wor-

shippers of the beast and his image ; but to predict the calamities and distresses in which they will be involved in this world. The model text is plainly that which is contained in the thirty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, where he describes the destruction of Edom. "Their land shall be drenched in blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, the year of the recompense for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into *brimstone*, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day ; the smoke thereof shall go up forever, from generation to generation, it shall lie waste ; none shall pass through it forever and ever." Who thinks of interpreting this of the eternal punishment of the inhabitants of that country ? For aught I know, they were eternally destroyed. But, it was no part of the prophet's design to teach that sentiment. He speaks only of its temporal calamities, and the whole description to the close of the chapter clearly proves it. The smoke ascending up *forever*, is the very language of John, and the phrase *forever and ever* is explained to be *from generation to generation*. The same declaration is expressed in the subsequent verses in a similar manner, where it is predicted, that the wild beasts, the satyr, the owl, and the vulture, "shall possess it *forever, from generation to generation* shall they dwell therein." Such is the condition of that country to this day. John uses the same language with the same signification.

Smoke is sometimes the symbol or visible token of the anger of the Lord, as in Ps. 18:8. 'There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured.' Here also, fire signifies the truth, or the threatening which God utters. Smoke also expresses figuratively great calamities, such as war, and invasion, as in Isa. 14:31.

‘There shall come from the north a smoke,’ referring to the overthrow of Babylon by the Medes.

The writer of this book often subjoins an expression, which is a key to the explanation of the figures he uses. So here, the next clause shows what he means by the smoke of their torment; viz.: *They have no rest day nor night*, who worship the beast and his image. They have no true peace within themselves, because they do not seek to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ according to the gospel. And the providences of God will be such, that they will have no rest in outward circumstances. What a spectacle have catholic countries presented, and do still present in regard to this matter!

12. *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*—It is difficult to ascertain the connection and application of this verse. The word translated *here*, signifies also ‘*thus*,’ or in like manner, and the idea may be, that at this period of calamities to the papal antichrist, the patience of the saints will be brought into exercise in a peculiar manner. Certain it is, that at this period, which we suppose is the sixteenth century, as the Reformation spread in Germany, France, Switzerland, England, Scotland, Ireland and Denmark, the papists were alarmed, embittered, and made vengeful, (the very thing perhaps which is meant in the preceding verses,) and the protestants experienced unrelenting opposition and persecution. Queen Mary restored popery in England, and occasioned scenes of barbarity and persecution which shock humanity. In this century, the order of the Jesuits was founded, and the inquisition was established: and the horrid massacre of the protestants in Paris on St. Bartholomew’s day, was perpetrated. At this period too, the papacy began the inhuman practice of burning people alive,

because of their belief and propagation of the truth, and great numbers perished in that manner.

13. *And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.*—It is the heaven of the true church which is meant in this place, and the voice is that of the faithful reformers declaring God's truth against the doctrine of purgatory, masses, and prayers for the dead. John was commanded to write down the truth, to be used in future times against that prodigious money-making imposition, that the *dead* who die in the Lord, are presently, or from that time, *happy*. Yea, the Spirit declareth, that they peacefully rest from their labors, and their good works follow with them to be rewarded. They enter at once into a state of happiness and rest from toil and suffering. Let this precious truth stand forever as a condemnation of the impious assumption, that there is a purgatory, from which people may be exempt by the payment of great sums of money; or, that their stay there may be shortened by the purchased prayers of the priest and the church.

14. *And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*—Daniel saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven. Christ said concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, 'They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.' In all these cases, coming with clouds, and sitting on a white cloud, mean a signal display of the divine character in the remarkable events, which are to transpire, particularly the

divine power, justice, and sovereignty. On the cloud sat one who appeared like the Son of man, indicating, that the events appertained to his kingdom ; having on his head a golden crown, the emblem of sovereignty, showing the extension of his kingdom, or a new era of its prosperity. A sickle is an instrument commonly used for cutting grain, that it may be gathered into the storehouse.

15. *And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap : for the time is come for thee to reap ; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*—This angel from the temple, may represent the faithful preachers of the gospel at that period ; and his address to him who sat on the cloud, may mean their fervent prayers, that a spiritual harvest may be reaped, and their full belief that the time had come for this.

16. *And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth ; and the earth was reaped.*—The phrase *on the earth*, gives altogether too broad a signification to this prediction, unless it be borne in mind, that it is the Roman earth. In each of the instances, it would be better to substitute the word, *land*. The sickle was thrust in, and the harvest reaped. This has usually been interpreted to signify the infliction of judgments ; but I prefer to understand it according to the true import of a harvest, as a great spiritual ingathering to the church and kingdom of Christ. The reformation spread over the northern countries of Europe, gave spirituality and life to the church, and made vast multitudes of converts to the Lord Jesus.

17. *And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*—In the other instance



the sharp sickle was in the hand of him who sat on the cloud ; here it is in the hand of the angel, who may represent some agent or agency for executing the judgments foretold in the next verse.

18. *And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire ; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth ; for her grapes are fully ripe.*—Another angel came from the altar on which the burnt sacrifices were offered, having power over fire,—authority or control over the fire of the altar, to kindle or extinguish it, as he pleased. This angel seems to be a personation of faithful ministers, who have, and preach God's truth, and by it kindle the fire of conviction in men's consciences. His relation to the altar seems to imply that these judgments which he directs to be inflicted, will consume the enemies of Christ, as fire consumes the offered sacrifice. With a loud cry, showing earnestness and the importance of the thing to be done, he bade the angel with the sharp sickle, do the work for which he was commissioned. By affirming that the grapes were fully ripe, he affirmed that the time for punishing the wicked communities referred to, had arrived, their iniquities having arisen to a great height.

19. *And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.*—The order is executed. The reaping and gathering of the grain indicates the prosperity of the church subsequent to the reformation. The gathering of the vintage and treading of the grapes is a figure used in scripture with a different signification, viz : as expressing terrible calamities, such as bloody and de-

structive wars. Thus in Isa. 63 ch. : I have trodden the wine-press alone, &c. The day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come ; and I will tread down the people in my anger, &c. The expression, *wine-press of the wrath of God*, plainly shows that dreadful judgments are meant.

The papal hierarchy with its almost numberless abominations had now attained its greatest height ; was fully ripe for the vintage ; and now its decline and ruin were to begin. England had declared itself independent of the pope. Knox aroused all Scotland to throw off the authority and superstitions of Rome. The Belgic Provinces, the Netherlands, withdrew from their allegiance to the pontiff. A powerful army was sent by Philip II., king of Spain, under the duke of Alva, to force them into subjection. After a long and bloody war, William of Nassau, assisted by England and France, delivered the provinces from both the Spanish and Roman yoke. Soon after the French clergy in convention declared the pope's pretensions to *temporalities*, null and void ; placed the authority of a council above that of the pope, and maintained that his decisions were not infallible, except when attended with the decision of the church. To all these things succeeded the bloody scene of the French revolution, and the wars of Bonaparte.

20. *And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*—The infidel movements attending and following that revolution, may perhaps be the treading of the wine-press *without the city*. Blood issuing from the wine-press in such quantity, shows that there will be great sacrifice of life. Whether the sixteen hundred furlongs refer to the church States in Italy, as some suppose, I know not.

## CHAPTER XV.

*Preparation for the Seven Last Plagues.*

It is declared in the tenth chapter, that ‘in the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.’ Under this last woe-trumpet are included the seven vials of the wrath of God, called also the last seven plagues, the description of which is now given. The events predicted under these symbols relate, as I think, to the destruction of both the antichristian powers, the papal and Mahometan, and fill up the time to the year two thousand, which will be the commencement of the millennium.

1. *And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.*—Another emblematic representation of great and marvelous changes in the firmament of government, viz: seven angels, or instrumental agents, having the seven last plagues, in which the wrath of God on the western and eastern antichrist, is completed.

2. *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.*—The phrase, *sea of glass*, is an incorrect translation; the word for glass being an adjective, and not a noun, and the reading should be, a crystalline or transparent sea. To interpret this sea as meaning the blood of Christ, or “the

gospel covenant," or 'an allusion to the brazen sea in the court of the temple,' I regard as fanciful guessing; a disregard of the principles which should guide us in explaining the symbols of this book.

A sea is the emblem of a community or nation in a state of agitation and commotion; and fire is the emblem of divine truth, and sometimes of divine anger. Is not my word like fire, saith the Lord? Behold, I will make my words in thy mouth, *fire*, and this people wood, and it shall devour them. Jer. 5 : 14. A transparent sea mingled with fire, is *a nation in a state of agitation and excitement concerning the truth*; or, the truth is one of the elements of that excitement, and all combining to produce an enlightened, moral, and more purely spiritual state of things, indicated by the transparency of the sea. As is customary with this writer, he has given a clew to his meaning in the subsequent portion of this verse, and it confirms the interpretation just given. Those who had successfully resisted the papal civil power, and the papal ecclesiastical power, (the beast and his image) and had refused to receive his mark and the number of his name, *i.e.*, to adopt his corrupt forms of worship, and be subject to his authority, *stood on that transparent sea, mingled with fire*, having the harps of God in their hands, in the attitude of praise, as having come out of those commotions with triumph; and they *stood firmly* in the midst of these agitations and conflicts, upheld by the power of the Lord, and rejoiced in witnessing the reforming and purifying effects produced. The sea became translucent. What a beautiful and striking representation of the blessed effects of the labors of the reformers on the continent of Europe, and of the puritans in the days of Cromwell and the English Commonwealth, and subsequently! How firmly did they maintain divine truth; how zealously did they diffuse it, and what glorious results have followed!

The fire and the water, two opposite elements, were mingled, but the fire could not be extinguished.

3 and 4. *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.*—We have here the substance of the song which those courageous, noble-minded, godly men are said to have sung. As Moses composed a sublime song to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from the power of their Egyptian oppressors at the Red Sea, so this song commemorates the deliverance of the Lord's people from their oppressors at the time referred to, and therefore, is called the song of Moses. And, as this deliverance was wrought preeminently by faith in the blood, righteousness, and power of Christ, it is called the song of the Lamb. It declares the works of the Lord to be great and marvelous: that he is just in his dealings with his enemies, and true and faithful to his believing people.

In view of the great things he had done for them, and for his cause, they ask with grateful admiration, Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? Then, as was truly characteristic of the men of that period, they express their confidence that all nations shall pay a spiritual and acceptable worship to the Most High; for these interpositions will clearly show his approval of the good and the true in distinction from that which is false and injurious.

If, however, we give to the word translated *judgments*, the signification which it also has of *precepts*, we shall have another evidence that we have assigned to this prophecy,

the right period and the right fulfillment. The reading then would be, All nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy precepts have been made known. The fact was, that the art of printing was discovered about that time, and the Bible was disseminated, and its truths inculcated with great zeal. Indeed, from that age to the present, the efforts of protestant Christians have been directed to the great work of making known the precepts of the Lord to people of all nations.

5. *And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.*—After this, another scene was presented, preparatory to the pouring out of the vials. The apostle seemed to himself to be in the temple, and beheld the holy of holies, into which none but the high priest ever entered, laid open. In that sacred place was the ark of the covenant, a chest in which was a copy of the law delivered to Moses, and over it a luminous appearance, indicating the presence of the Deity. His dwelling-place being opened in heaven, so that a view could be had of it, signifies, as I think, that God would give peculiar manifestations of himself to his church in that period, and that his people would have great freedom in approaching him in prayer. It is well known, that such was the fact, when the Protestants and especially the Puritans, threw off the dead formalities of the Romish church, performed in a language not generally understood, and poured forth their fervent prayers in language dictated by their wants and the feelings of their hearts. There may also be indicated here that era of freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, which began with Protestantism.

6. *And the seven angels came out of the temple, having*

*the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.*—The seven angels, who might with propriety be called ‘ministers of vengeance,’ came out of the temple, as if they were officiating priests, clad in pure and white linen, as the priests used to be, emblematic of moral excellence, and girded about their breasts with golden belts, indicative of strength and resolution in their righteous cause. Coming out of the temple where was the manifested presence of God, may signify, that they were commissioned by him.

7. *And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever.*—This symbolic action of one of the four living creatures, mentioned in the fourth chapter, which represent the ministers of the true church,—giving the vials or rather bowls to the agents for executing the judgments intended, may signify, that the infliction of them would be in answer to the prayers of faithful ministers, and in vindication of the holy cause they labor to sustain. These bowls were filled with the wrath of God, a figure showing that there were to be these distinct and signal manifestations of the displeasure of God against the opposers of true religion. The vials therefore, with their dreadful contents to be poured out, mean the infliction of divine judgments. This will appear as we come to consider them separately.

8. *And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.*—At the dedication of the temple by Solomon, when the ark of the covenant was carried in and put in its place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so

that the priests could not stand to minister. This was a token of divine favor. So in this visionary representation, the temple was filled with smoke from the glory and the power of God. This may mean, that while the predicted judgments would fall on papal antichrist, the presence and favor of God would be manifested in his true church by sustaining it, purifying it, and enlarging it. The church will be favored in a peculiar degree with the influences of the Spirit, expressed by the glory and power of God. This, together with the remarkable dispensations of providence, will deter worldly, unconverted men from rushing into the church, by making a profession of what they never possessed. It is difficult to fix on the particular events which constitute the fulfillment of this verse. The idea of the writer seems to be, that the providences of God will be peculiar toward his church during the period embraced by these vials, in sustaining, defending, and purifying it. And it may be well to remark by way of anticipation, and to aid in the explanation, that some of these vials embrace our own time, particularly the fifth; and in a very short time, the things predicted under the sixth, will take place.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### *Judgments on the Antichristian Powers.*

THE period embraced in the pouring out of the seven vials is probably about 400 years, extending from the great Reformation to the millennium. Vials of the wrath of God, or, more correctly, *bowls*, are emblems showing that as a fluid is poured from a bowl, so the displeasure of



God against the corrupters of Christianity, would be manifested in the infliction of judgments upon them, and the angels commissioned to do this, are the instrumentalities which God will employ for this purpose.

1. *And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*—The preparation being made, a great voice out of the temple gives command for the wrathful visitation to begin. As the tabernacle in the wilderness, and subsequently, the temple at Jerusalem, were the sources of divine communications, the presence of God being manifested there; so, the great voice from the temple, signifies, that these judgments proceed from him, who now dwells in his church, and they manifest his care of it.

2. *And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.*—The first vial was poured upon the land, that is, upon the people of the papal dominion; for we are immediately informed, that the effect produced related to the people. A bad and distressing sore came upon the upholders of the Latin worship, which is the mark of the beast, and upon those who bowed down obsequiously to the papal hierarchy, which is the image of the beast. But what is meant by the painful wound or sore? Mr. Faber says, ‘it was the atheistical spirit which pervaded Catholic nations, and which was so fatally developed in the French revolution.’ It is surprising, that he should not have perceived, that this plague is something grievous and distressing; not something which the people chose, loved, and cherished, as they do erroneous sentiments. A proper at-

tention to the history will show any one that this running sore was the exposure, by the reformers, of the errors, superstitions, shameless sale of shameful indulgences, and other abominable practices of the papal church. This exposure and reprobation did grieve, vex, and torment the dignitaries, priests, monks, and adherents of that mother of abominations; for they saw, that their power and resources were in danger. A deep and incurable wound was inflicted on the corrupt system, by the preaching and writings of those faithful reformers.

There are certain coincidences between the seven trumpets and the seven vials, which deserve notice. The effect of the first trumpet was upon the *land*; so also was that of the first vial. The effect of the second trumpet was upon the *sea*, turning it into blood; so, as to the second vial. The third trumpet affected the rivers and fountains; so the third vial. The fourth trumpet affected the sun; so does the fourth vial. The fifth trumpet refers to the corruption of religion by the superstitious and idolatrous practices introduced by the popes; the fifth vial is poured on the seat of the Roman beast. The sixth trumpet looses the Turks for conquest, called the four angels limited by the river Euphrates; and the sixth vial is poured upon the Euphrates, and dries up its waters, that is, destroys the Turkish power. The seventh trumpet introduces great changes,—a new state of things,—mighty revolutions symbolized by lightnings, thunders, voices, earthquakes and hail; so does the seventh vial. These are called the last plagues, doubtless, because they will be the last destructive visitations on the papal and Mahometan antichrist previous to the millennium; at which time these delusions will be swept away, and the nations will be deceived by them no more.

3. *And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.*—The sea is usually the emblem of a nation in a state of agitation, and the sea turned into blood imports a sanguinary revolution. In this instance, the sea became like the blood of a dead man, stagnant and putrid. Here also the effect was upon the people; for it is added, every *living soul* died in the sea. By every living soul is meant every human being, the term soul being often used in scripture for the whole man. Death in the sense of this writer, generally signifies the extinction of moral or political life, as when individuals or nations are thrust down from their proper rank into obscurity and insignificance; or when they have become morally degraded, ignorant, and corrupt. This vial refers probably to Spain and to Italy, countries almost surrounded with the sea. Not only was Spain unsuccessful in the long and bloody war with the United Netherlands, and her vast Armada was destroyed; but from that time, (the close of the sixteenth century) she declined in power, in learning, and in morals. The inexorable inquisition suppressed inquiry, investigation, and propagation of divine truth. The society of Jesuits was established, and the bloodthirsty vigilance of the spies, minions, and officials of the pope, struck terror into all classes of the people. This inhumanity and grinding oppression was backed up and sustained by the vast influence and the arms of Charles V. The effect in Spain and Italy was the almost total extinction of spiritual light and life. Mosheim states, that ‘the inquisitors put so many to death, and perpetrated on the friends of liberty such horrid acts of cruelty and oppression, that most of the reformists consulted their safety by a voluntary exile; while others returned to the religion of Rome, at least in appearance.’ ‘The inquisition reigned triumphant in Spain,

and by racks, gibbets, stakes, and other formidable instruments of torture and death, soon frightened the people back into popery; and suppressed the vehement desire they had of changing a superstitious worship for a rational religion.' As a consequence, the life blood of the soul became stagnant: spiritual death ensued; moral putridity spread through the body politic; and to this day, it has experienced no resurrection. The key of knowledge was taken away; the vitality of religion was destroyed; and a dead carcass of formalism was all that remained.

4. *And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.*—The third vial was poured on the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became as blood. As in the case of the third trumpet, so here, rivers and fountains signify the sources of knowledge and power to a people. Now, the schools and seminaries of protestants, their faithful and learned ministry; their churches and means of disseminating truth, were sources of knowledge of great value. In the early part of the seventeenth century, there was a bloody religious war against the protestants, and they were driven out of Austria and some other of the important states of Germany. Thus the rivers and fountains became blood.

5, 6, and 7. *And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus: For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*—But when the protestant cause seemed on the verge of ruin there, a sudden change took place in its favor. Gustavus Adolphus, king of

Sweden, who had espoused the cause of the reformation, marched an army into Germany, was everywhere victorious, and his troops continued to be successful against the enemies of protestantism, after his death. These conflicts went on for eighteen years, when conditions of peace were agreed upon at Munster in 1648, which secured the toleration of the protestant religion. To this, as we may suppose, the words of the angel refer in the fifth and sixth verses, acknowledging the righteous retribution of the Lord on the persecutors of his people. The angel from the altar gave an accordant rejoinder.

8 and 9. *And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun ; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues : and they repented not to give him glory.*—The fourth vial had its effect on the sun, and *it was given to him* (so it should be read) to scorch men with great heat. The sun is an emblem of an important civil power, and the scorching men with heat is the exercise of power injuriously and oppressively over them. It is probable, that France is the kingdom meant by the sun ; and it is worthy of remark, that the king takes the sun for his emblem. That France did scorch men with great heat during the time of this vial, which comprises about one hundred and forty-eight years, ending in 1794, is too apparent to admit of a question. When we call to mind the contests between the house of Austria and that of Bourbon ;—the overthrow of the French monarchy in 1789 ;—the infamous and bloody revolution which resulted in establishing a republic ;—the reign and wars of Bonaparte ;—the prevalence of infidelity and atheism ;—the declaration of the national assembly, that there is no God ;—and the intolerable oppression and calamities under

which the people groaned, we may perceive what is meant by this vial. Truly, men were scorched, and blasphemed God; but instead of repenting and rendering due honor to him, they have persisted in their unbelief and wickedness.

10 and 11. *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*—The fifth vial was to discharge its contents on the seat or throne of the beast. This beast is the Latin kingdom, or papal dominion,—its seat is Rome itself. The effect will be, that his kingdom will be filled with darkness, which is the emblem of great distresses and calamities, as well as ignorance. This effect is expressed more fully by the phrase, *They gnawed their tongues for pain.* Thus the prophet, Joel, predicting a time of peculiar calamity, said, The day of the Lord cometh,—a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. Also Isa. 8 : 21, 22.

It is added as another effect of this vial, that they blasphemed God, because of these pains and sores; *i.e.*, because of their distresses, and the exposure of their frauds, their wickedness, and lying abominations. Yet they repented not of their deeds. The pontiff, the cardinals, the almost numberless priests, monks, and friars, and those who sustain them, have persisted in the same course as formerly, and have admitted of no reform in their religious system or general practice.

12. *And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*—The

sixth vial will be poured on the great river Euphrates, the effect of which will be to dry up its waters, and *prepare the way to the kingdom of the east*. The sixth trumpet announced the rise and conquests of the Turkish power, under the figure of loosing the four angels which were limited or restrained by the Euphrates; and the sixth vial predicts the destruction of that power, under the figure of drying up the waters of that river. An effect of this is declared to be, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared. It is common in prophetic writings, to use the term *king*, for kingdoms, and so it is here, for the literal reading is, *Kings of those who are at the rising of the sun*. The idea seems to be, that the waning of the Turkish power will open the way for the free introduction of Christianity to the eastern nations.

This favorable change is probably now commenced. The Sultan has granted a full toleration of the protestant religion, and is fast putting an end to persecution. A communication from our missionaries among the Nestorians in the north-western part of Persia, informs us, that the sway of the Turkish scepter, "is now as equitable and humane, as it is effectual;" and this change is attributed to "the recent ingrafting of righteous elements, such as religious toleration, the prohibition of bribery, oppression, and extortion on the part of the rulers." It is stated by them, "The Lord has now opened the Koordish mountains to the gospel, in a manner as effectual as it is marvelous." The gospel is having a mighty effect there in enlightening the people and turning them to the service of God. Thus, the way to the kingdoms of the east is laid open to the Christian church; and this too at the very time, when, as is known, the waters of the Turkish power are being dried up. As Darius took Babylon by cutting a new channel for the Euphrates, so that it passed round one side of the city, thus laying its

bed through the city bare; so protestants are cutting a new channel for the waters of salvation in that region, and Mahometanism with the Turkish power, will fall.

13. *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*—In connection with these events, John saw three unclean spirits resembling frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, which is the emblem of the heathen Roman empire, and out of the mouth of the beast, which is the Christian Roman empire, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, which is the papal hierarchy. Coming out of the mouth shows, that the utterance and propagation of sentiments peculiar to each, is what is intended. This appears from the explanation given in the next verse:—*For they are the spirits of devils, i.e., demons;* and to these is assigned the work of intelligent beings,—a work requiring great skill, wisdom and influence. They go forth to the kings of the *land*, the empire, and of the whole world, to rouse them up and assemble them to a great moral conflict, called the battle of the great day of God Almighty. The idea is, that about the time of the overthrow of papacy and Mahometanism in Europe and Asia, there will be a remarkable rousing up of the spirit of heathenism, and of nominal and spurious Christianity, such as now pervades the old world, to make a strong resistance, a general and virulent opposition to the progress of true religion. This great struggle between the enemies and the friends of the cause of Christ, will be the mightiest and the last, previous to the millennium. It is well styled the battle of the great day of God Almighty; and is doubtless already begun.

We should observe the similarity of these *last plagues* to those, which were inflicted on the Egyptians. One of



those was the breaking out of boils and blains on the people ;—another was, that the rivers and fountains became as blood ;—another was darkness ;—another was that of the frogs ;—another of fire and hail ;—and the slaying of the first-born was a miniature of what will be done in the course of this great battle, in which God's retributive vengeance on the enemies of his people, will be signally displayed.

These impure spirits work *signs*, not real miracles, but deceptive tricks to increase their influence, and accomplish their purposes. It is well known, that these have been, and still are very numerous with the Romanists ; and to prop up their declining power, they will be practiced in time to come.

15. *Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*—To those who are blinded by their delusions and are slumbering in false security, the providential coming of Christ to do these things, will be as unexpected as the stealthy approach of a thief. He, therefore, is pronounced *happy*, who watches and keeps his garments about him ; otherwise, being roused from sleep he has to make his escape in nakedness, and be exposed to shame. These will be times of great trial, and every one should be well clad in the garments of righteousness, the graces of the Christian, and be watchful against error, and delusion.

16. *And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*—And he, that is God, (for there is no other antecedent for this word,) gathered the enemies of his cause to a place called Armageddon. This is supposed to be the valley near Mount Megiddo where two great battles were fought, mentioned in 2 Kings 23 : 29, and in Judges 4 : 16–19. In that country, perhaps,

will be the severest part of the struggle of the two great antichristian powers against true Christianity. Just at that crisis the seventh vial is poured out, and great changes take place.

17. *And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air ; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.*—The seventh vial is to be poured into the air, indicating perhaps the universality of its effects, and particularly its effects on the kingdom of the prince of the power of the air. A great voice from the temple of heaven, is a proclamation from the divine presence. The brief and emphatic announcement is, *It is done.* The period for the continuance of false religions will now draw to a close. Heathenism, Mahometanism, and Popery will be swept away. The era of millennial light, truth, and holy influences will then begin to dawn upon the world.

This seventh vial corresponds with the seventh trumpet, at the sounding of which, as we are told, the mystery of God will be finished, and there will be great voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; and he shall reign forever and ever.’ Both carry the prediction of events onward to the millennium, which will commence, as I believe, in the year two thousand. The time from the present to that, will be, in a peculiar sense, the time of preparation, in which there will be great commotions, wonderful changes, bloody wars, and mighty revolutions. These are predicted in the next verse.

18. *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings ; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.*—

*Voices* are governmental edicts and proclamations. Thunders and lightnings are symbols of wars and hostile invasions; and an earthquake is that of a revolution. There is a special importance attributed to the earthquake here predicted. The epithets employed in this instance, lead us to conclude, that it will be vastly important, as respects the objects aimed at, and the effects to be produced. It will be *great and mighty* as to its extent, embracing as it doubtless will, all the nations which once composed the Roman empire. Thrones will fall; kingdoms, empires and states will be overturned; and a new order of things will succeed. Tyranny, despotism, oppressive rule, both civil and ecclesiastical, will be abolished; and in their stead will be established constitutional governments, guaranteeing to the people their rights, and having in view the best good of the whole. It is probable, that the revolutions and commotions in Europe which have signalized the past and present year, are tending to this result.

19. *And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.*—The great city refers probably to the papal dominion, and its division into three parts, may signify three great parties, like those now existing in Italy, viz: those who are in favor of the civil and ecclesiastical supremacy of the pope; those who would allow him ecclesiastical supremacy only; and those who are for neither, but would abolish the hierarchy entirely.

In this period of convulsions, *the cities of the nations will fall*. This struggle for civil and religious liberty, which is now going on, has and will yet cause the capture and reduction of the principal cities of nations, or the civil power of those nations will be greatly diminished.

And great Babylon, the mystical name of Rome, was remembered by God, to give to her in his retributive justice, the wine-cup of his terrible wrath. This is an allusion, perhaps, to the ancient practice of putting criminals to death by giving them poisonous mixtures. That anti-christian hierarchy, which has destroyed the lives of millions of protestants, is doomed to experience the awfulness of divine indignation. An expanded view of this is given in the eighteenth chapter.

20. *And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*—The fleeing away of islands and mountains, means the subversion of states and kingdoms, together with the long established political or religious systems. The phrase occurs in this sense in the sixth chapter, where the reference is to the overthrow of heathenism in the reign of Constantine, and the cessation of those false systems which were connected with it. A mountain is the symbol of a kingdom. Thus, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the stone, cut out without hands, that smote the image, became a *great mountain* and filled the whole earth, where mountain means the kingdom of Christ. So in Isa. 2 : 2. The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains; *i.e.*, the kingdom of the saints will be established over all the kingdoms of men. The fleeing away of the islands and mountains, will be the overthrow of all the kingdoms and hierarchies, which are opposed to the cause of the Redeemer, with their idolatrous and oppressive systems, religious and civil. It is the divine purpose, that "the nation and the kingdom, that will not serve him shall perish." The *mountains were not found*, is a very strong expression, showing as in the eighteenth verse, that the revolutions and consequent changes will sweep away the existing governments, so

completely, that no vestiges of them will remain. An entire new order of things will be produced.

21. *And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent : and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.*—What is signified by a great hail out of heaven ? One of the plagues inflicted on Egypt was a tempest of hail, which destroyed the flax and the barley, two of the most valuable productions of that country, and with these whatever was growing in the fields. Thus were their means of sustenance and the sources of their wealth cut off. It is to be observed, that the hail in the prediction before us, fell on the *men*, and that it *came out of heaven*, which, as I have repeatedly remarked, is in this book, the emblem of government. Now, it seems to me, that there is a peculiar significancy in each of these expressions ; else why should it be said that the hail fell on the *men*, rather than the earth, or fruits of the earth ? And as hail comes from the clouds as a matter of course, why should it be specified here that it came out of heaven ? The interpretation which I would give is this : there will be ruinous burdens laid on the people by the government, consisting of exorbitant exactions in the levying of taxes and the plundering of their property ; in conscriptions of men to fill the armies of conflicting nations in these turbulent times ; and in oppressing them by other means, destructive to their interests and welfare. Wars and revolutions, destitution and distress will probably characterize this period.

*A talent* was a term used anciently for a certain amount of money ; the Roman silver talent being of the value of about a thousand dollars ; the Jewish talent was double that value.

Instead of true repentance while suffering these calami-

ties, the people will blaspheme God, that is, speak against him, and manifest great obduracy and impiety. It is usually the case, that if men are not subdued and reformed by divine judgments, they are made worse; more obstinate and inimical toward Him who chastises them. An intensive expression is added, teaching, that these calamities will be peculiarly severe. The plague of the hail *was exceedingly great*.

We are assured then that the period of the seventh vial will be distinguished by unusual overturnings and distresses, even such as have never been since men were upon the earth. It will be the transition period in which the dominion of Satan will be weakened, and the cause of civil and religious liberty, of truth and godliness will obtain the ascendancy. The final overthrow of that despotism, civil and religious, with which the eastern world has been cursed, will then be witnessed; and governments will become the guardian power of the rights, the peace, and the welfare of men. A glance at the state of the world, is sufficient to convince any one that the preparation for the reign of Christ, must involve vast changes in almost everything pertaining to the social, political, and religious state of mankind.

Ours is that preparation period. Ours is the time for recruiting the army that is to fight the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Ours is the important work of equipping the men and the women for that prolonged contest, which already is begun. But, let me not convey the idea that we are exempted. We are to bear our part, not only in preparing for what is to come, but in actual service, for even now the battle is begun. Our talents, our strength, our influence, our prayers, our efforts, our almsgiving, are needed now, and more now, perhaps, than they ever will be hereafter. It is a great thing to live in such an age as

this. It is a great honor to be in the forward ranks of that army which is moving on conquering and to conquer under the guidance of the King of kings. Truly our responsibilities are great!

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### *A description of the Papal Church.*

AS THE destruction of papacy is the next event in the series, the announcement of it is preceded by a description of that hierarchy; and though penned more than a thousand years before it had attained the height of its supremacy, it is accurate in every particular. A woman is a scriptural emblem of the church, and also of a city. The true church, maintaining purity of worship and doctrine, is styled ‘a chaste virgin,’—‘the spouse of Christ,’—‘the bride and wife of the Lamb.’ A church that is corrupt in doctrine and worship, so that it forfeits its character, and becomes reprobate, is called a harlot, and sometimes an adulteress. Referring to the early period of its purity, we have had the true church represented as a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head. 12 : 1. Now, we have an apostate church described in its deepest degeneracy, as an abandoned woman given to mercenary lewdness and prostitution; and her condemnation is declared.

1 and 2. *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; With whom the kings*

*of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.*—One of the angels commissioned for the infliction of the seven last plagues, informed John that he would now disclose to him the *condemnation* of that great *mercenary prostitute*, who sitteth on many waters. The term *great*, may refer either to the extent of her influence and power, or to the enormity of her wickedness. The many waters over which she presides as mistress, are explained in the fifteenth verse to be ‘peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.’ *Sitting* on those waters implies an established authority and control over them.

With this lewd woman, the kings of the earth, *i.e.*, of the empire, have committed fornication,—have adopted her superstitions, her corrupt doctrines, and her wicked practices. The people also have been intoxicated with the wine of her fornication,—have drunk in greedily her errors; and have been infatuated with them. As prostitutes gave love potions to inflame the passions of their paramours, and attach them more closely to them; so that corrupt church has invented almost numberless ways to excite admiration, to gratify pride, and infatuate the people. Its imposing ceremonies, the splendid vestments of its officials, its numerous festivals, its gorgeous processions, and its adoption of the most attractive portions of the rites of their heathen ancestors, are all designed to bind her votaries to her in the strongest attachment. The world beholds the fulfillment of this prediction.

3. *So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*—In this visionary exhibition, John seemed to himself to be carried away into a wilderness, which is to be understood



as an appropriate emblem of the desolating effects of this system of delusion and oppression, for the wilderness was *where the woman resided*. There he saw her sitting on a scarlet-colored beast, the same wild beast as that described in the thirteenth chapter, which is the Latin empire, whose number is 666. That empire supported, carried, and obeyed the meretricious woman. To designate it more fully, its color is mentioned, which, as is well known, has been the distinguishing color in the personal decorations and equipages of the Roman emperors, senators, generals, and chief officers.

This beast had many names of blasphemy, or blasphemous titles and appellations,—such as belong only to God. These were impious and profane,—such, for instance, as, ‘The eternal city,’ and the pope is called, ‘His holiness,’ ‘Sovereign of kings and kingdoms,’ ‘Christ’s vicegerent,’ ‘God upon earth.’

This beast had seven heads, which are explained in the ninth and tenth verses to mean either the seven hills on which Rome was built, or the seven forms of government under which the empire existed, called seven kings. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms comprised in the empire.

4. *And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.*—The attire and ornaments of the woman were most gorgeous and costly. Instead of being arrayed in linen, clean, and white as the spouse of Christ is, this harlot glares out before the world in gaudy colors;—the popes with the scarlet tiara and triple crown, and robes of the same hue;—the cardinals with red caps and red stockings extending to the knee, as if it had been for ages the intention to verify this prediction of John.

The riches of the old and the new world have for many centuries been poured into the treasures of that church, and have been profusely lavished to increase its splendor and gorgeousness.

In the hand of the woman was a cup filled with the offensiveness and uncleanness of her fornication. 'This,' as a writer says, 'represents the fascinating allurements, the impostures, delusions, promises of impunity, indulgences, absolutions, with hopes of worldly interest and preferment, by which this church has obtained and preserved her influence, and seduced men to join in her spiritual fornication and corrupt worship.' As the church is called the spouse, the bride, the Lamb's wife, the corruption of its worship, the introduction of heathenish and idolatrous practices, is termed lewdness and adultery. With great propriety are these terms employed in this case, as descriptive of a church whose worship is a combination of heathen and Jewish rites with Christianity; and which sanctions and prescribes the worship of saints, and relics, and statues, and crucifixes, and the virgin Mary. With these abominations, the nations have been infatuated, and intoxicated as with the contents of an inebriating cup.

5. *And upon her forehead was a name written, mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.*—The name of this licentious woman is made conspicuous upon the forehead,—a name which proclaims her character, infamous and revolting as it is. This is a fore-showing of the fact, that she is not ashamed of her wickedness, but vaunts it before the world, and glories in it. The name inscribed is '*Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.*' Fleming says, 'that not many centuries back on the *front* of the pope's mitre, the word *mystery* used to be inscribed, and was worn

till the reformers discovered and pointed it out to the people as the scripture mark of Antichrist, and that the word was then erased.' The sentiment expressed by the exhibition of this descriptive and reproachful name upon the forehead, is, that the character of this woman is fully known, and that she is not ashamed of it, but glories in it. As Babylon of old was the capital of the vast Assyrian empire, and the center of idolatry, and oppression of God's people; so Rome, excelling in these respects, is called *Babylon the great*. And, as she has been the prolific source of corrupt and corrupting influences, she is styled, The mother of harlots and of those spiritual abominations which she has spread over the earth.

6. *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus : and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.*—Another characteristic mark of the harlot is, that she is a murderess. She riots in the blood of the saints and martyrs,—is even intoxicated with it, as an inebriate with strong drink. Her cruelty, oppression, persecution and slaughter of believers, have been flagitious and notorious. Millions have been put to death in all the horrible ways of torment, which ingenuity could suggest. These atrocious acts have been perpetrated in one form and another for more than a thousand years. *I beheld*, says Daniel, *and the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them.* The contemplation of this fact filled John with amazement and horror.

7 and 8. *And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not ; and*

*shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition ; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*—The angel observing the wonder of the Christian seer, offered to disclose the mystery, and explain to him more clearly, who this woman is, and what is the beast that carries her. A wild beast is the emblem of an oppressive, persecuting government. The beast with seven heads and ten horns is the Latin kingdom or Roman empire. *It was and is not.* It existed at first as a pagan or heathen kingdom. When Christianity obtained ascendancy in the reign of Constantine, it ceased to be a heathen kingdom, and became nominally Christian. At the close of the verse it is added, ‘ *and yet is,*’ which means, that it had become idolatrous and oppressive again under the papal authority. Says Bishop Newton, “The empire was idolatrous under the heathen emperors, and then ceased to be so under Christian emperors, and then became so again under the Roman pontiffs, and hath continued so ever since. But in this last form it will go into perdition.”

The papal form will resemble the pagan form inasmuch as it will arise out of the bottomless pit, which is an emblem of a state of darkness, ignorance and depravity in the people. It was from just that state, that both those systems arose.

The expression, *was*, and *is not*, and *yet is*, has proved true politically, as well as religiously. For the empire was overthrown by the northern barbarians in A.D. 467. It remained in a broken dilapidated condition till Pepin, king of France, made the pope a temporal prince by the gift of certain states in A.D. 758, and Charlemagne soon after enlarged and confirmed this grant, in consideration of which the pope gave him the title of emperor of Rome. The pope has possessed and exercised temporal power ever since, till

the last year, when it was taken from him by his own subjects, and he fled in disguise to Gaeta. By the intervention of other nations, it has been restored to him; but the time is probably near, when the beast, the Latin kingdom, will go into perdition; and we may soon see this last remnant of the empire pass away forever.

They who dwell on the earth,—the Roman earth, will be filled with amazement, as they witness this final destruction of the beast. Observe what is the character of those who are the devotees of this antichristian power. They are declared to be those *whose names are not written in the book of life*:—those who are not the true followers of Christ,—whose names are not enrolled as those who have spiritual life.

9. *And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.*—The papists have often denied, that this description was intended to be applied to the Roman hierarchy; but *the mind that hath wisdom* will readily understand the explanation which the angel gives. As in a former instance the kingdom alluded to was known by the number 666, chap. 13 : 18; so here the same thing is made evident by the description which follows. In the first place, the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. Rome, the seat of this power, civil and ecclesiastical, is built on seven hills. These were named, the Palatine, Capitoline, Quirinal, Cælian, Esquiline, Viminal, and Aventine. This designates the locality of the woman's residence.

In the second place, the seven heads designate the seven kinds of government, called here seven kings, under which the empire had existed, except the last, which was yet future when John wrote. The first of these was the government of kings,—the second was that of dictators,—the

third that of prætors,—the fourth that of consuls,—the fifth that of triumvirs,—the sixth that of emperors, called Cæsars, which was the one under which John lived, and the seventh was that of patricians, or as some think, it was the exarchate of Ravenna, under which Rome was a dukedom for about one hundred years.

Five of these kings, or governments, had fallen or passed away when John wrote:—*one is*, the imperial then existed, and one was to come. and would continue but a short time. The patriciate continued only forty-five years, whereas the imperial which preceded it, continued more than five hundred years.

11. *And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*—The wild beast that was, and is not, and yet is, we have just shown to be the Latin kingdom. It was a pagan idolatrous kingdom, then it was not such when Constantine and his successors eradicated paganism and made Christianity the only religion tolerated; and now under papacy it has become heathen and idolatrous again by a profane mingling of heathen rites and customs with Christianity. Any person who will read the little book of Conyers Middleton, D.D, entitled a "*Letter from Rome, showing an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism,*" will have abundant proof that the draconic beast still *is* having his eighth form, which is the papal, and it is of the seven, as being a continuation of the same power, and having the character of its predecessors in respect to oppression and persecution. The old Roman empire exercised control over the nations of Europe; though it did not destroy their nationality. So, papacy has exercised a control over those nations, and popes have put forth the claim, that there is no rightful authority, which is not derived from them and subject to them.

They have deposed and anathematized kings and absolved their subjects from allegiance to them. But this eighth government goeth into perdition, *i.e.*, will be utterly destroyed.

12. *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.*—Here we are told what is meant by the ten horns. They are ten kings, or sovereignties. The Roman empire in the west comprised ten kingdoms, *viz.*: France, Spain, Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, Portugal and Italy. These had not received supreme and independent power when John had these visions; but they had power as subordinate sovereignties, *one hour*, that is, at the same time with the beast. We conclude, then, that the events which will bring ruin on the papal hierarchy, will occasion the overthrow of the governments of the ten kingdoms. They are the same as the ten toes of the image which Nebuchadnezzar dreamed he saw, and which are to be ground to powder by the stone which was cut out without hands, and became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. If we date the rise of the papal power at A.D. 606, the 1260 years of its continuance will end in 1848, according to the prophetic time of 360 days to a year, or in 1866 of common time. We may expect therefore to hear of convulsions and overturnings among the nations of Europe, like those which have recently taken place.

13. *These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.*—This is a declaration, that all these nations will be agreed in upholding popery. Whatever differences have existed among them in regard to other things;—though they have waged most bloody wars against each

other, they have agreed in acknowledging the supremacy of the Roman beast, and in former ages have upheld it with all their influence and resources. Having thus given their power and strength to the beast, they must be involved in its ruin.

14. *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them : for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings ; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*—This prediction should be seriously considered ; for it shows, that the Catholic nations of Europe as a whole, have been opposed to the pure and simple religion of the gospel, for the last thousand years ; and that their prevailing systems and practices, though professedly Christian, have been hostile to the cause of Christ. Till the reformation, there was scarcely an exception to this, and even now the greatest portion of the population of Europe is wholly and strongly opposed to the holy doctrines and the pure spirituality of the gospel. Ignorance, superstition, and formalism still maintain their predominance. Thus they do still make war with the Lamb.

But he will overcome them by the means he has appointed,—by distressing calamities, by terrible judgments, war, pestilence, and famine, and by his truth working powerfully in the minds of the people, enlightening and reforming them.—The certainty, that Christ will overcome them, is predicated on the fact, that he is King of kings and Lord of lords,—he is the supreme ruler, and of course will make his own cause triumphant.

It is added as another fact connected with this victory, *They who are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.* His true servants are those who are with him ;—they are called by his Spirit, and made his ;—they are chosen as vessels of mercy and designated to perform a great work ; and



they are faithful,—are conscientious, intrepid, and persevering. Such were the reformers, such were the puritans, and such are many now who are laboring in the same cause.

15. *And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*—Here is the angel's explanation of the term *waters*, as used in this vision. It means a multitude of people of different nations and languages, foreshowing the great extent of the spiritual dominion of the church symbolized by the woman. Her boastful name is *The catholic or universal church*.

16. *And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.*—This discloses the manner in which the papal hierarchy will be destroyed. The ten kingdoms which have given their support to that antichristian system, as stated in verse thirteenth, will finally hate it, despise it, and strip it of its fictitious attractions, and take away its wealth, and consume with inspired truth its whole organization. This is depicted in the usual emblematic style. They will *hate the whore*, because they will become fully sensible of her character and abominations. For years past this spirit of opposition to her usurpations, and of detestation of her deluding, debasing, and idolatrous principles and practices, has been increasing and will continue to increase. They will make her desolate and naked by withdrawing from connection with her, and so strip her of her extensive dominions. They will *eat her flesh*, *i.e.*, they will confiscate her vast church estates, cut off her resources, and take possession of her monasteries and nunneries, and convert them to better uses. They will *burn her with fire*. Here is an instance

proving clearly, that the term fire is used metaphorically and not literally. For the woman is a symbol of a corrupt church, and as such is not capable of being literally burned; and further, that church is composed of a vast multitude of different nations and languages. A church so composed, cannot be literally burned with material fire. What then is the meaning? It is this,—the ten kingdoms being reformed from popery, will consume that whole system with God's truth, which is called by himself a fire. This fire was applied by the reformers, and is burning with rapidly increasing brightness and intensity. The flames are bursting out all over the ten kingdoms, and have now reached the seat of her vitality. Take as a single fact, that eighty thousand copies of the Bible were sold in Rome in a few months after the flight of the pope to Gaeta.

17. *For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.*—We are then assured, that all this will be in accordance with the will of God; and that these kingdoms will yield subjection to the beast until the time arrives for the fulfillment of his prophetic words. All will be accomplished as he has purposed and declared.

18. *And the woman which thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*—To remove all doubt as to the meaning, we are distinctly informed, that the *woman is that great city*, &c. Jerusalem is an emblem of the true church;—Babylon is the emblem of the oppressive, idolatrous church of Rome. She it is, who has ruled over the kings of the empire. Her influence has controlled not only their religious, but their civil affairs. She has taken the crowns from the heads of their rulers, or conferred them at her will. She has absolved their subjects from

their allegiance to them,—dictated terms of intercourse,—roused to war, and prescribed terms of peace, and more than all, controlled the *consciences* of rulers and the ruled. As a celebrated historian says, “The popes claimed supreme dominion, not only over the church but also over kings themselves, and pretended to reduce the whole universe under their ghostly dominion.” But her doom stands recorded on the page before us, and waits only the arrival of the appointed time for its full and fearful realization. This doubtless is near at hand.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *The Destruction of Mystic Babylon.*

1. *And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power ; and the earth was lightened with his glory.*—In these dramatic visions, personages are introduced as speaking and acting, either to carry on the scenic representation, or as symbolizing the instrumentalities by which the things predicted were to be performed. *Another* angel, distinct from those who have been introduced, appeared to the mind of the apostle, as coming down from heaven, having great power, indicating a great work to be done ; and the earth was illuminated with his glory :—a flood of light emanating from him will be diffused over the empire. This angel may be considered as the personification of those important instrumentalities, which God employs to spread the light of his truth, and to expose and eradicate error ; particularly the faithful preaching of the gospel, the dissemination of the scriptures, and of all that truth which is adapted to work the

destruction of civil and religious despotism, and the reformation of mankind. The appearance of this angel, and the illumination he occasions, precedes the destruction of great Babylon; and thus the diffusion of gospel light will precede the overthrow of that hierarchy.

*From heaven, i. e.,* the high places of power and influence, both in church and state, the light will be poured forth, dissipating moral and intellectual darkness, exposing errors and delusions, and preparing the way for freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, and purity of worship. As great power and the radiation of much light, are characteristic of this angel, we may suppose, that great changes will be wrought by the instrumentalities of which, as it seems to me, he is the personation. This mighty symbolic angel is now spreading his light in papal countries; and the consequence is, that the people there begin to perceive the delusions and errors under which they have been held; they are showing a determination to continue in that state no longer; and the indications are strong and decisive, that Babylon the great is soon to fall and rise no more.

2. *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*—The angel cried mightily with a strong voice, indicating that it was a great event which he announced, and that it was vastly important to have it widely known. The nations, which have been so long and so thoroughly deluded with this system of splendid abominations, should understand its nature and pernicious effects, and be aware of the certainty of its destruction.

The astounding announcement of the angel is, *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.* The repetition of the phrase *is fallen*, indicates the certainty of the event. Its towering

greatness, its vast influence, its imposing grandeur, and its ruling power, are doomed to destruction. The completeness of the destruction is affirmed by its becoming a habitation of demons, &c. So says the prophet Jeremiah concerning ancient Babylon, '*It shall become heaps, a dwelling place of dragons.*' Isaiah says also, '*The houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.*' These, instead of the proud, luxurious, and impious inhabitants, shall have their dwellings there.

3. *For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*—The reason of this utter destruction is here given. She has been the source of corruption and debasement of the nations. They have been seduced, by her inflammatory cup, into spiritual lewdness, that is, into idolatrous sentiments and practices. The kings of the earth have adopted her corruptions of Christianity, and have given the whole strength of their influence to spread them; and the venders of indulgences, images, pictures, crosses, &c., have made themselves rich by the traffic.

4 and 5. *And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.*—Having given this description of this antichristian community, (for a church of Christ it is not) and forewarned the world of its destruction, which is a thing never to happen to the *true church*; a solemn command is uttered to separate wholly from it, and have no participation in

its sins ; for those who participate in her sins must receive of her plagues. The enormity of her sins was such that they have reached to heaven, and called for the vengeance of God ; and he hath remembered them to render a righteous recompense for them. The voice from the heaven of the true church, requiring all her people to separate from this antichristian community, must be considered as prophetic, the same as other parts of the vision. It is a prediction of what will be ; and, therefore, teaches us, that previous to the destruction foretold, or in its progressive stages, there will be incessant and urgent calls to those who are to be acknowledged as the people of God, to separate from that heaven-doomed establishment.

6. *Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works : in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.*—This also is prophecy, and not to be understood simply as a precept, addressed to those, who, in the preceding verse are called, *my people*. It is an energetic apostrophe, and its design is, by making this direct personal address, to show what will be done in the future. There will be repaid to her double to what she has done. There will be paid back to her double the unsparing vengeance she has practiced. In the providence of God, the cup of sorrows will be filled to her again and again.

7. *How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her : for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.*—Just in proportion as she hath exalted and magnified herself, and indulged in luxuriousness, there will be given to her dishonor and destitution ; for, in the greatness of her pride she says, *I sit a queen*,—*I abide*

in the enjoyment of regal authority, splendor, and joyousness, as ‘mistress of the world.’ *I am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.* I am not a bereaved, lonely widow, nor shall I experience the sorrow of desolateness and destitution. Such language Isaiah attributed to Ancient Babylon, thus, ‘Thou sayest I shall be a lady forever—I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come on thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood.’—Isaiah 47 : 7-9.

S. *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*—The appropriate language of prediction is now resumed, and John proceeds to say, that the papal harlot will be made to experience just what Isaiah foretold of ancient Babylon. Because of this pride, self-confidence, and boastfulness, the desolating judgments of God will come in one day, *i.e.*, suddenly. *Death* will be one of these judgments, the violent death of the people by wars, and political death, *i.e.*, the extinction of political existence. *Mourning*, grief and sadness on account of the declining and ruinous state of things:—and *famine* literally a great destitution of what is necessary to support life: ecclesiastically, it means spiritual sterility, and a destitution of those privileges which are necessary to sustain spiritual life.

Further, *she shall be utterly burned with fire.* This punishment is doubtless the same as that predicted by Paul in 2 Thess. 2 : 8, to be inflicted on the man of sin, which is another name of the papal antichrist. ‘Whom,’ says he, ‘the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of his coming.’ Now it is evident, that the truths of the gospel are meant by the

breath of his mouth, which is to consume the great apostasy. Using another figure, John calls it a fire; the effect in both cases is to consume. They are not two separate destructions, but one and the same. To destroy with the brightness of his coming expresses the same catastrophe, and shows still another instrumentality; which I understand to be not a personal coming by any means, but remarkable dispensations of his providence, and the powerful influences of his Spirit.

In the case under examination, we should inquire, what is to be utterly burned with fire? It is the mystical Babylon, the Roman hierarchy,—a politico-religious system, falsely called a church. Dropping the emblems, I ask, what kind of fire that must be to destroy a moral, political, religious system? It certainly must be, not the material element of fire, but the word of God, the everlasting truths of the gospel. This fire, the reformers in England and Germany applied with prodigious effect; and it has been burning ever since; and will continue to burn brighter, hotter, and more widely, till that vast system of deception and blasphemy be consumed. In conjunction with this, there will be peculiar calamities, and desolating judgments, destroying the lives of some, and opening the eyes of others; and all conspiring to complete the same overthrow.

It is added, *For strong is the Lord who judgeth her*. No artifice of her own,—no aid from her lovers,—no power on earth or in hell, can deliver her when the time of her destruction shall come.

9 to 19. *And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, &c.*—The sorrowful feelings of the rulers of the



empire, and of the traffickers in the religious wares of this religious establishment, are now expressed in a long and pitiful lament. Bishop Bale, once a Romish priest, paraphrases these verses in a manner which shows his perfect understanding of the whole matter. The following somewhat abbreviated specimen, I quote from Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary. "Her mitered merchants, her shorn soldiers, her mass-mongers, her soul-sellers, and her mart-brokers, waxed very rich through the sale of her oils, cream, salt, water, bread, orders, hallowings, houselings, ashes, palm, wax, frankincense, beads, crosses, candlesticks, copes, bells, organs, images, relies, and other peddlery wares."

"And they who have *lived wantonly* with her, in following her idle observances in matins, hours, and masses; in going processions with canopy, cross, and pyx; with banners, streamers, and torch light, with such other gauds too foolish for children."

"Alas, alas, that great city, that beautiful Babylon, that blessed holy mother, the church, which had so many popes' pardons, so many bishops' blessings, so many holy stations, so many clean remissions *à pena et culpa*, so many good ghostly fathers, so many religious orders, so much holy water for spirits; is now decayed forever."

"Alas, alas, who shall pray for us now? Who shall sing dirges and trentals? Who shall spoil us of our sins? Who shall bless us with a spade, and sing us out of purgatory when we are dead? If we lack these things we are likely to want heaven. These are the desperate complaints of the wicked." This whole description is adapted "to convey in the most impressive manner imaginable, some idea of the splendor, luxury, excess, and self-indulgence of all kinds, which have so long triumphed in the powerful, magnificent, luxurious, and licentious metropolis of popery; and which have enriched a vast number of individuals in

different ways by impoverishing the nations belonging to that communion."

Even ship-masters, sailors, passengers, and those who trade by sea, unite in this deep-felt lamentation, that in one hour so great riches have come to naught, and this great city is made desolate. In view of its ruin manifesting so clearly the avenging justice of God, they are represented as standing afar off, filled with fear, and venting their sorrows with weeping and wailing.

20. *Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets ; for God hath avenged you on her.*—The godly, even those who have gone to their eternal rest, are called upon to rejoice over the downfall of this corrupt and oppressive hierarchy ; and this dreadful visitation is declared to be from God, as a manifestation of his avenging justice.

21. *And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.*—The completeness and suddenness of this destruction is emblematically represented by the act of a mighty angel in taking up a stone like a great mill-stone, and casting it into the sea. This and other expressions repeated in this prediction, lead us to conclude, that the final catastrophe on Rome and the papacy will be effected by some sudden and special judgments of God. What these will be we know not. A part of the process is now going on in the convulsions which are shaking the seat of the beast ; the recent flight of the pope ; the capture of Rome by the French army ; the overthrow of the short-lived republic, and now the restoration of the old despotism, all carrying the whole structure of papacy to ruin.

Here again the revealing angel used a figure employed

by an ancient prophet. Jeremiah put his prediction of the destruction of Babylon in Chaldea, into the hand of Seraiah, and told him to go and read it to the people; and, said he, 'It shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book, thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates: and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her.' So completely annihilated has that great city of the east become, that it has long been a question where it once stood. Like the casting of a great stone into the depth of the sea, shall papal Babylon be thrown down, and be found no more at all. From that fall there will be no recovery. The whole influence, power, and wealth of that idolatrous, corrupt hierarchy, will be swept away, and probably Rome itself will be blotted out of existence.

It is worthy of notice, that among the articles of merchandise, one is, *the souls of men*, an expression which sometimes means the same as persons. As a matter of fact, it is literally true in this case. Romanism, as a theological system, is in direct opposition to the gospel of Christ. It enjoins almost innumerable religious observances, and causes people to expect salvation by these, rather than by faith alone in Jesus Christ. It imposes penances and austerities, instead of that true repentance which is unto life. It makes obedience to the church the ground of acceptance with God, instead of a simple reliance on the atonement and righteousness of Christ. It teaches that there are other mediators, such as the saints, and the blessed virgin, beside that one Mediator, whom God hath appointed. It makes forgiveness of sins to depend on confession to the priest and absolution granted by him, instead of faith in the atoning Redeemer. It makes a fictitious purgatory and deliverance from it to depend on masses well.

paid for before a person dies, or by his friends, after he is dead. Its sale of indulgences, dispensations, absolutions, &c., begets false hopes, and quiets men in their sins, even sins the most obnoxious. Thus does it trifle with the interests of the soul, and sends its millions into eternity with a lie in their right hands. What a traffic !

22. *And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee ; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.*—In the poetic language of Jeremiah and of the old prophets, it is declared, that instead of the sound of music from various instruments delightful to the ear, there shall be the stillness and silence of the grave. No cunning artificer shall be found there any more to ply his trade of manufacturing church wares ; and even the sound of the millstone shall cease, either because there would be no people to need the flour produced by them, or because consecrated cakes and wafers will be no longer called for as profitable articles of merchandise in a communion that will use them no more.

23. *And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee ; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee ; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth ; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.*—The wax candles, now deemed so important, will no longer burn at her altars, and in the apartments of the dead ; the gladsome greetings of the bridegroom and the bride will be heard no more : for the sellers of church commodities have made themselves great by their unrighteous gains, and her sorceries, jugglery, pretended miracle, and pious frauds have long deceived

the nations, but now will deceive them no more. Her imposing processions, her gorgeous shows, and splended festivals, which have long kept up the delusion in the minds of the people, will be held in derision, and be made to cease forever.

Bishop Bale upon the last clause has the following :  
“Thy shorn shavelings (monks and friars) were lords over the multitude, when they held their priestly authority over the souls and bodies of men, yea, and with thy privy legerdemain, with thy juggling castes, with thy crafts and enchantments of thy subtle charms were all nations of the world deceived.”

24. *And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.*—Christ told the unbelieving persecuting scribes and pharisees, that upon them would come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth ; and so in regard to this spiritual Babylon, it is predicted that upon her would be found the blood of prophets, *i.e.*, preachers of Christ's gospel, and the blood of saints ; the believing and godly, and indeed the blood of all slain in the land. The number of those who have been put to death by tortures, by fire at the stake, in dungeons of the inquisition, and by open wholesale slaughter, is almost incredible. The unspeakable guilt of this is yet to be recompensed, for the day of vengeance is determined by the Lord. Desolating wars with other terrible calamities, will signalize coming years, and show to the world the judgment of this antichristian hierarchy ; and send a thrill of fear through the hearts of men, as did the destruction of the idolatrous oppressive Egyptians and Babylonians in ages long since past.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*The Final Conflict with Papal Antichrist.*

THE last chapter carried us into that portion of these visions which relates to the future. We have done with history, because we have done with what is fulfilled. The historical record of the events of this and the following chapters, is yet to be written. In making out the interpretation, we must now be guided by the analogy of the book, and the rules we have already employed in explaining the language of symbols.

1. *And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia ; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God.*—The destruction of mystic Babylon, which had just been foreshown, will cause a shout of praise to God from many people for that auspicious event. This is said to be done in heaven, which may signify the symbolic and not the literal celestial heaven ; for it seems to be the grateful act of those, who are relieved from the oppressive domination which had been exercised over them. That it is the thankful ascription of praise of Christian believers, appears from the expression, *our God* ; and we should bear in mind, that the whole is a revelation of things pertaining to the Christian church on earth ;—things declared at the opening of the book to be those, which were “shortly to come to pass,” and “the things which shall be hereafter.” This tribute of thanksgiving is like that recorded in the twelfth chapter, where the civil authorities of the empire and of the church render grateful acknowledgments for the triumph of Christianity over heathenism under Constantine. Furthermore it is a

prophetic declaration, showing, that at the destruction of the papal Antichrist, there will be great rejoicing in the high places of civil authority, as well as in the church for this signal interposition of God in behalf of his suffering cause and suffering people. It is the alleluia of the people for their relief from the exactions, impositions, abuses, and oppressions of the Roman hierarchy.

The word alleluia is from the Hebrew Hālal, to praise, and Jah, a name of God.

The translators should not have omitted the article, *the*, before the several substantives of the ascription; for it gives a designed particularity to it. We should read it thus,—*The* salvation, *the* glory, &c. The salvation wrought for the church by its deliverance from a corrupt and despotic domination,—the glory of that merciful interposition,—and the power by which it is effected, be ascribed to the Lord our God.

2. *For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.*—The particular reason for this devout praise is here assigned. For true and righteous, *i.e.*, faithful and equitable, are his judgments,—his retributive acts, in punishing the great harlot, who hath long corrupted the earth, (by which is meant here as elsewhere, the people) with her superstitions, idolatries, and perversions of divine truth. God is righteous too in avenging the blood of his servants, who had been put to death by her murderous hand.

3. *And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever.*—The repetition of the grateful acclamation, *Alleluia*, indicates a deep sense of the favor conferred. As a dense column of smoke rising into the air, is

seen at a great distance ; so the evidence of these consuming judgments, will be very conspicuous, and will be long remembered. In other words, the destruction here foretold, will be notorious, and will make a lasting impression. The figure is similar to that in Isaiah 34 : 9, 10, which describes the destruction of Idumea. Both Isaiah and John probably adopted the figure from the manner in which Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, concerning which it is said, "The smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

4. *And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen ; Alleluia.*—The true church represented by the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, unites in the same ascriptions of praise to Him, who administers the government of the world according to his own will.

5. *And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.*—The throne in the preceding verse is a symbol of divine sovereignty ; but in this verse it appears to be the symbol of civil authority. A voice from the ruling authority gives command for all classes of Christians *to praise our God*. The term *our God*, shows, that it is not the Lord himself who issues this command, but, that it is one who joins himself with the people in acknowledging God, and in rendering thanksgiving unto him. It is a civil proclamation for the universal expression of thanks to the Almighty Deliverer.

6. *And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying Alleluia : for the Lord God omnipoten.*



*reigneth.*—The command thus given is obeyed, and a shout is pealed forth by a great multitude, like the roar of many waters, and mighty thunderings, repeating the exultation, *Alleluia*, &c. The relief will be felt to be so great, when this system of darkness, delusion, and oppression is overthrown, that the friends of true religion will rejoice, that the Lord God, the Almighty Ruler, reigneth. It will be felt and acknowledged, that this prostration of this long continued politico-religious power, is the work of the Lord.

7. *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*—This overthrow of papal Antichrist, will be followed by a new era of prosperity to the church. The above-named multitude of believers, therefore, exhort each other to gladness and rejoicing. This era of prosperity and increased purity of the church, is emblematically represented by the marriage of the Lamb, and the preparation of his bride for that event. A marriage is an open and public acknowledgment of the espousals of those who become husband and wife. It is the consummation of a union, when they are to abide together according to divine ordinance. So at this coming period, Christ will signally manifest his love to his true church called his wife, and will take her into closer intimacy and fellowship, and as a loving bridegroom abundantly supply her wants. For this happy event she will be prepared by the influences of the Spirit, making her more holy, increasing her devotedness and zeal, and qualifying her to do honor to her Lord. When the errors and superstitions of papacy shall be swept away, the true church will receive peculiar tokens of her Redeemer's love. It will be to her a new era of prosperity,—an era in which she will appear in the adornings of

spiritual graces, the beauty of holiness. As a lovely bride she will manifest the charms of spiritual excellence, and send her attractive influence over the world. It should be carefully observed, that the revealing angel places the harlot and the Lamb's wife in contrast with each other, as different persons, entirely distinct, totally unlike in character and destination. Let those who glory in what they call *The Mother Church*, think of this !

8. *And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*—The attire of the lewd woman was described to be of purple and scarlet color, and her ornaments were gold, and precious stones, and pearls. Very different is the attire of the Lamb's wife. To her it was given to be arrayed in fine linen clean and white, and this is explained to be the *righteousness* of the saints;—not the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, but those virtues which are the fruits of the Spirit.

9. *And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.*—Having spoken of the marriage of the Lamb, the instructing angel bade John write, saying, *Happy* are they who are called to the marriage supper, that is, to a participation in the abundant blessings and enjoyments of that period. Those, who have experienced the holy joys, and heavenly communings of a pure and powerful revival, know something of the happiness of those who will participate in that marriage festival. The church will be purified from unbelief, worldliness, uncharitableness, and many other sins, and Christ will come near to it and manifest himself to it, shed abroad his love by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of his people, and give

them a rich and soul-satisfying feast. No doubt, at this period great numbers of the Romanists will be converted,—savingly called to this marriage supper.

10. *And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not : I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus : worship God : for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*—The soul of the apostle kindled into ecstacy, as this delightful prospect was presented to his mind ; and he prostrated himself at the feet of the hierophant to worship him. This he was forbidden to do, because, said he, I am thy fellow servant, a servant as you are of Jesus Christ ; and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus ; the testimony concerning Jesus to deliver to mankind. Our work is the same, which is to make known the will of Christ concerning his church to the world. This testimony is the spirit of prophecy, the great subject, the chief scope of prophecy. Both of us have from Christ the spirit of prophecy, and the work of prophets to perform. It might be inferred that the angel was in fact one of the old prophets commissioned to make this revelation to John. Upon this, I may speak more fully in another place.

11. *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse ; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True ; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.*—A new scene is now presented, imposing as to the actors in it, momentous as to the events embraced, and glorious as to its results. This is the final conflict with Antichrist, which is to precede the millennium. On the territorial domain of the church, within the Roman empire, is to be enacted what is now symbolically represented.

A white horse is an emblem of joyous victory, as in the

sixth chapter, where John says, Behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given to him and he went forth conquering and to conquer, which predicts the early triumphs of Christianity. The symbol before us has a similar signification. Upon the white horse was seated a princely rider, whose name, indicative of his character, is Faithful and True; *faithful* in everything pertaining to his mediatorship; *true* to his word of promise and of threatening. In righteousness doth he *govern*, and wage war. His government is administered in equity, and justice marks his way in all his conflicts with his enemies.

12. *His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself.*—His eyes like a flame of fire indicates that his knowledge is thorough and searching. The many crowns on his head denote his dominion over the nations. A name was inscribed on his person, probably the forehead, the import of which no one fully comprehends but himself. What the name was, we are not informed. The Savior himself said, ‘No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.’

13. *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God.*—His vesture dipped in blood, indicates a great slaughter of his enemies, as in Isaiah 63 : 1–3. His name is called the *Word of God*, probably because from the beginning, he has been the teacher of mankind, the revealer of the character and will of God. ‘The words, which I speak are not mine, but his who sent me.’

14. *And the armies which were in heaven followed him*

*upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*—The armies of the glorious chieftain are also mounted on white horses, and like the bride, are clothed in linen white and clean, emblematic of the purity of their characters. This dress shows them to be Christ's believing people; and their being on white horses, shows that they share with him in the warfare and in the victory.

15. *And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron : and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.*—Here we have proof positive that all these things take place in this world, and depict the conflicts and the progress of his church.

The weapon employed in this battle is a sharp sword, which goeth out of the mouth of the conqueror. This is *divine truth*. Paul says, Eph. 6 : 17, 'Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the *Word of God*.' This is a spiritual and not a carnal weapon; and this shows what is the nature of the warfare. It is a moral warfare, involving all the interests of men. It is a struggle between despotism and freedom, both civil and religious; a conflict between the friends of light and the upholders of ignorance and superstition; a conflict between those who would give the Bible as a common boon to mankind, and those who would keep it from the people; a conflict between usurpers and despots in church and state, and the friends of liberty, of conscience and equal rights; just such a conflict as is now going on all over Europe. It is the stone which is cut out without hands, breaking to pieces and grinding to powder the lower extremities of Nebuchadnezzar's image; the kingdom of Christ warring against the kingdom of the beast in this last period of its direful prolongation. 'The

strong holds of Satan' are trembling, and will ere long be laid prostrate.

The result of this great conflict is plainly indicated by the declaration, *He will rule them with a rod of iron*; an iron scepter, that is, with irresistible power and authority. He will subdue them to himself, and rule over them with undisputed sway. Furthermore, as grapes are put into a wine-press and trodden or mashed, that the juice may be expressed; so this mighty conqueror will manifest the terribleness of divine wrath by crushing his enemies. What a fearful work has yet to be performed among the nations which have upheld the papal Antichrist!

16. *And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.*—Another name of this glorious conqueror was made conspicuous on his vesture and on his thigh. The muscles of the thigh are the strongest in the body, and in them lies the power of motion and activity. The import of it is, that he is able to acquire and maintain all that supremacy which is implied in the name, King of kings, and Lord of lords. The kingdoms of the world are to become his kingdoms, and acknowledge him as the reigning sovereign.

17 and 18. *And I saw an angel standing in the sun, &c.*—The announcement of the result of the battle is made in the most conspicuous manner possible. The sun is the symbol of the highest ruling authority; and the angel standing in it, making proclamation, suggests the idea, that the event which he declares is most important, and will awaken universal attention, and will be everywhere notorious. It is like the utterance of a voice, that would be heard round the globe. The angel, as if clothed with the authority of God himself, summons all the birds of prey to

come to a supper which God will make ; and feast on the flesh of kings, and captains, and mighty men, and of horses, and of the free and bond, the high and low. This speaks an entire defeat of the enemies of Christ, and a terrible slaughter of them. Ezekiel gives a prediction of the same or a similar battle, and in nearly the same language. 39 : 17-20.

19. *And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.*—Here is presented the opposing force with which Christ and his army are engaged. It consists of the beast which carried the harlot, viz. : the Roman civil power, and the kings of the Roman earth, who support papacy, and their armies consisting of the opposers of pure Christianity. From this description we might infer, that the previous conflicts of the church have been but mere skirmishes, compared with what is yet to come. The time betwixt the present and the millennium, will doubtless be occupied with terrible conflicts with the enemies of human rights and a pure Christianity.

20. *And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*—Here we have the issue of this momentous warfare. The beast is the civil power of Rome,—the false prophet is the papal priesthood. This is made evident by what is said of his doings, viz., he wrought miracles in the presence of the beast, and by these deceived those who had received his mark, i.e., those who practice the Latin worship, and those who bow down in reverence and subjection to the hierarchy, which is the

image of the beast, resembling it in its arrogance, its claim to universal rule, and in its despotism. It is notorious, that for many centuries past, and at this day, the Romish priests by various tricks, perform what are called miracles, to delude the people, to overawe their minds, and keep them in a state of blind subjection.

The beast and false prophet, having long acted in concert, *are seized, and cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone.* It is not a little remarkable, that commentators have either not given an interpretation of this passage, or have passed over it with a single remark, assuming that the lake of fire means hell. That it does not mean Gehenna, or the place of eternal punishment, is to my mind certain, and for the following reasons. 1. It is a figure, like most others which John uses, borrowed from the Old Testament, where the corresponding expressions have not that signification. In the eleventh psalm showing how God deals with men in this world, David says, ‘The Lord trieth the righteous; but the wicked and him who loveth violence, his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he will rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest.’ So, in the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, the Lord saith, ‘when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, my fury shall come up into my face,—and I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.’ No one can be at a loss in understanding this to mean the infliction of judgments on the invaders of the land of Israel. The whole chapter makes this indubitable. It is probable, that there is here again an allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and to the plagues inflicted on Egypt.

2. Scriptural usage, analogy, and the consistency of this prophetic narrative, forbid the interpretation which makes



it mean hell. For the whole description is plainly that of a great conflict between the Christian church and Antichrist ; and this terminates with casting the latter into a lake of fire, &c. Now the false prophet is a concrete phrase, and does not signify an individual man, but the Romish clergy of all grades, many thousands of persons, some of whom are scattered all over the Christian world. To suppose that these are to be seized, and literally cast *alive* into the place of eternal torment, is, to say the least of it, a very improbable supposition. Then also, the beast is not a person, punishable as such ; but, it is a civil persecuting government, administered by its proper officers under the controlling influence of popery, as it is now in all the catholic countries of Europe. And how is a government administered by numerous successive agents, to be literally cast alive into hell ?

Again 3.—The phrase *alive* or *living*, shows, that the punishment, whatever it may be, is to be suffered in this world. And it seems as if the writer used that word on purpose to prevent the misunderstanding of this passage which is so general. No one can rationally suppose that great masses of officials scattered over the earth, and even whole nations, who are, or have been under the government of the beast, are to be taken and cast living into the place of eternal torment. Men usually die before they go there, and we are also taught that there must be a day of judgment to consign the wicked to that place. To say that *alive* means at the height of their power and prosperity, does not relieve the difficulty at all.

What then is the meaning ? It is, as I conceive, that the papal states of Europe, and the papal church, the countries and the people who are under that hierarchy, which has so long been doing battle against Christ and his truth, will be subjected to *fiery* trials,—long continued and terri-

ble calamities, until that corrupt and oppressive system is destroyed. By various means, by the diffusion of revealed truth, waking up the people to a sense of their duties and their rights: by convulsions and overturnings in governments; and by remarkable and distressing events in divine providence, the power and influence of Romanism will be destroyed. These with their natural effects, disappointment, chagrin, grief, and entire despair of sustaining the hierarchy any longer, and utter hopelessness of its being again revived, will be like a consuming fire, eating into the soul. It may be, that this consuming process has already begun.

A fourth reason for the above interpretation is, that Daniel predicts the same destruction of the beast and the papacy in words which limit it to this world. Says he, 7: 26, *The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it unto the end.* This is said of the fourth beast who should devour the whole earth, and the horn, who should speak great words against the Most High, and wear out the saints of the Most High. Let it be observed, that what John expresses by being cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, Daniel expresses by *depriving of dominion, to consume and destroy it to the end.* Daniel says again, verse eleventh, "I beheld till the beast (the same beast) was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." And immediately following this, Daniel speaks of the giving to Christ "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him." So here in the apocalypse, the millenium follows the destruction of the beast and the false prophet. Both prophets speak of the same events, and the language of the former explains the language of the latter.

It is certain, then, that the whole reference is to things to transpire in this world, and not at all to the future world,

except by implication. Being cast into a lake of fire and sulphur, is a figurative expression, signifying the infliction of various distresses and desolating calamities, which together with other means, will work the destruction of papacy both politically and ecclesiastically.

I am aware, that I expose myself by this interpretation to the charge of believing the doctrines of universalism.

Let those who may be inclined to prefer such a charge, know that it is utterly untrue. It is positively declared, that '*he who believeth not on the Son of God, shall not see life*;'—that '*the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment*;' and that '*the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, taking vengeance with flaming fire on them who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*' John 3 : 36. Matt. 25 : 46. 2 Thess. 1 : 7, 8, 9. These, and similar declarations, I fully believe in their literal import. But I do not believe that John has taught, or intended to teach the doctrine of a place of torment in another world, and the punishment of the wicked there, in the passage under consideration. True it is, that the sudden destruction of the wicked by divine judgments, such as the deluge,—the burning of the cities of the plain with fire from heaven,—the submerging of Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea,—the overthrow of Babylon and other great cities for their wickedness, and the slaying of myriads on the field of battle, does imply, that the wicked among them do perish forever. But in interpreting the *facts* of prophecy, we are not to draw conclusions, and then make those *conclusions* the interpretation of the *facts*.

21. *And the remnant were slain with the sword of him*

*that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*—Who are the remnant? I would say they are those who do not perish by the above-named calamities. They will be slain in another manner; viz., the sword of Him who sitteth on the white horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth. This weapon, beyond all question, is his truth,—the gospel of the grace of God. These will be slain as all true Christians are, spiritually by the truth. They will be convinced of their sins, their errors, and delusions, and will abandon them, and submit to Christ. The sword of the Spirit will have its appropriate effect, being made living and powerful by that divine agent.

*And all the fowls were filled with their flesh.* This of course refers to those who are spoken of in the eighteenth verse. In the seventeenth chapter it is said of this same hierarchy, under the figure of a lewd woman, that the nations once subordinate to her, will hate her, and make her desolate, and naked, and *will eat her flesh*; which means, that they will strip her of her wealth, cut off her revenues, confiscate her estates, and thus take away the means of sensual indulgence and sinful pleasure. Whether the term *flesh* has the same meaning here, I know not. It is considered a great dishonor to have the dead bodies of human beings lie unburied, and become food for beasts and birds. The idea may be, that this overthrow and destruction will be entire and dishonorable to those who are the subjects of it.

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## CHAPTER XX.

*The Thousand Years called the Millennium.*

THE difficulties attending a consistent and satisfactory explanation of this chapter are many and great. In all the professed expositions of it, which I have seen, with the exception of that of Professor Bush, the error is committed of taking some parts of the language as literal, and other parts as symbolical, with no perceptible reason for this distinction. Viewing the *whole prophetic part of this book as symbolical*, I shall adhere to the rule, which has guided me thus far, which is, first to interpret the symbols, and then, if practicable, point out their fulfillment.

This chapter is a continuation of the same visionary representation of events as that of the preceding, and stands in immediate connection with it. Simultaneously with, or closely following the terrible calamities, which will work the utter ruin of the beast and the false prophet, which are the Roman civil power and the papacy, the binding and incarceration of the dragon will occur.

1 and 2. *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.*—An angel is any agent human or superhuman, or any instrumentality by which God accomplishes his purposes. I ask any man if, on serious consideration, he believes, that a celestial angel will come down to this earth with a great chain of iron or some other metal in his hand; and that he will seize another spiritual being and bind him with a metallic chain, and lock up such a spirit in

some deep, dark prison in this world or some other? We should say at first thought, that no person of common understanding, and but little acquainted with the figurative language of scripture, would believe this. And yet, such is the general belief, and learned commentators have regarded this as a literality, and have given their interpretations accordingly. To my mind this representation, like the destruction of the beast and the false prophet in a lake of fire, &c., is wholly symbolical. There is not an object presented in it, that is to be taken in a literal sense. The angel, heaven, the chain, the hand, the key, the bottomless pit, the dragon, the seizing and binding of him, are all symbols, hieroglyphics. Our first business is to explain them, *scripturally*, not *funcifully*, and according to the *usus loquendi*, or usage of this book.

The commentaries in common use, which are all I have at hand, do not explain at all, who or what the angel is, who is the chief actor in this scene; except that of Dr. Clarke, who says the angel is "one of the executors of the divine justice, who receives criminals, and keeps them in prison," &c. But, as the instrumentality of angels in one sense or another pervades this book, and almost everything is represented as being done by them; it is indispensable to a correct understanding of what is predicted, to ascertain in each particular case, what is meant by the angels. In the second and third chapters, the message to each church is addressed to the angel of the church, who undoubtedly was the pastor or minister. In other instances angels are the particular *instrumentalities* by which the events predicted are brought about. The description of the destruction of Babylon the great, is introduced by the descent of an angel from heaven, having great power, and illuminating the earth with his glory. This I explained as the personification of the appropriate instrumentalities for

diffusing the light of divine truth; such as the faithful preaching of the gospel, dissemination of the scriptures, and other means for the overthrow of civil and religious despotism and the reformation of mankind.

The signification of the term angel or angels, as agents or instrumentalities, must be such as will be appropriate to the particular work to be accomplished. The work now before us is the suppression and removal of something that is evil, expressed by the binding and imprisonment of the dragon. The angel then means the appropriate agencies or instrumentalities for this. And who are these, but the institutions of the state and the institutions of religion,—in other words, civil authority and the inculcation of divine truth? These are God's appointed means for the suppression of social and moral evil, and the reformation of mankind. First of all, the gospel, with its ministry and ordinances, and these protected in their free operation by the government. Accordingly the angel comes down from *heaven*, which term signifies the ruling authority, either civil or ecclesiastical, or both operating together. At the time intended, the institutions of religion and the influence of government will doubtless be conjoined, so as to form a mighty agency, for the eradication of the evil alluded to, which we shall soon consider.

This symbolic angel had *the key of the bottomless pit*. A key is an instrument for opening or making fast a door, and implies the power of admission or exclusion. Christ says, chap. 1 : 18, I have the keys of hades and of death, which means that he had “the power to bring to the grave, or to deliver from it,—to summon to the state of departed spirits, or to release from that state at the resurrection.”

In the ninth chapter these same symbols are made use of, and doubtless with similar significations. There, it is said a star fell from heaven, and to *him* was given *the key*

of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit. This star evidently was some eminent person, for he is designated by the personal pronoun, and personal acts are attributed to him. Of course it was not the literal heaven from which he fell, but it was from the highest official station in the church. See exposition of chap. 9 : 1-3. The key of the bottomless pit given to him, with which he opened the pit, and a great smoke arose, and out of the smoke came an army of locusts; signifies, that through his instrumentality a destructive army of invaders, the Saracens, would issue forth from their dark abodes, and overrun a portion of the empire. It would be a departure from analogy, and a strange inconsistency, to say that the same symbols in this twentieth chapter have an entirely different signification. We say then, that the heaven in this case is the ruling authority, civil or ecclesiastical, or both together;—that the angel is the agency and instrumentality which God employs to produce the effects intended;—and that the key of the bottomless pit to be used in this case to shut it up, instead of opening it, signifies the power and efficiency of that agency to suppress, remove, and confine the evil referred to.

A chain is used for binding criminals, and also for forcibly moving things; and is here an emblem of restraining force and control. Cruden considers its meaning in this place to be “Severe laws for the curbing of all open impiety.” It is used in scripture to express subjection and forcible restraint. Thus in Jude, the angels who rebelled, are said to be ‘reserved in *everlasting chains* under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Also 2 Pet. 2 : 4.

2. The dragon was laid hold of and bound for a thousand years. The above-named agencies and instrumentalities will be effectual. What now is the dragon? The dragon of the ancients was a fabulous monster of the ser-



pent kind, and is used by John as the symbol of paganism, or of a civil power under which paganism prevails. In the twelfth chapter, the term seems to be used in both significations. When used in a civil respect, it is described as having seven heads and ten horns; and when in a religious respect, it is "that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." This distinction in the signification of the term dragon, has not, so far as I know, been observed, and many perplexities and wrong conclusions have been the consequence. For instance, the great red dragon with its heads, and horns, and crowns upon its heads, has been generally admitted to be the *heathen* Roman empire. In the ninth verse of the same chapter, (the 12th) it is said 'the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan,' and this is very properly considered as the putting down and final suppression of paganism by Constantine and his Christian successors. But, if the dragon means the empire in both instances, the question arises, how could the empire be cast out, or eradicated from the empire? The fact seems to be, that in the one case, it is the pagan *civil* power that is meant; and in the other case, it is paganism *as a religion*, which is meant. My own mind was much perplexed with this difficulty, till very recently this distinction occurred to me, as I was observing, that the dragon in the two places is described with very different concomitants, indicating a difference in signification.

We can now see clearly what is meant by the dragon in the second verse of this twentieth chapter. It is designated by the same names, and doubtless means the same thing as in the ninth verse of the twelfth chapter. It is *Paganism*, which in former ages, *has deceived the whole world*;—one of the chief devices of the prince of darkness for destroying mankind. It is this which is to be suppressed and eradicated.

ed by the agencies and instrumentalities spoken of above. This, as the order of events is presented by John, will take place in immediate connection with the destruction of the beast and the false prophet, with which the previous chapter closed.

If, as in all the preceding visions, what is said here refers exclusively to the nations of the Roman empire, we can easily see what occasion there is for casting out of the idolatry and despotism, which are the chief ingredients of paganism from those nations. Civil oppression still reigns over nearly the whole of Europe, and paganism has for the thousand years past been incorporated into the Romish religion.

But, if the ejection and suppression of paganism in this instance, refers to portions of the earth now overspread with it; we see, that there is sufficient occasion and scope for the work. This great work, as I believe, is going on, as is also the destruction of the beast and false prophet, and will be continued for years to come, perhaps until the thousand years commence.

3. *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.*—Here too, all is symbolic. The term *abussos*, signifies an abyss, an unknown depth, and metaphorically, immensity. The idea of a place of punishment does not enter at all into its signification. If we attach that idea to it, it is an inference of our own, drawn from the attendant circumstances, or the apparent exigencies of the passage. The word occurs nine times in the New Testament, seven of which are in this book, and in no case is its signification, the place of the future punishment of the wicked. In the ninth chapter the

phrase bottomless pit seems to mean the dark and extensive region from which the Saracens issued in immense numbers, spreading their conquests to a great extent. The allusion in the case under consideration may be to those caverns in the earth, which were used as places of concealment from enemies, and of confinement for criminals. The sentiment, as it seems to me, is, that paganism, including as its essential ingredients, superstition, idolatry, and despotism, will be eradicated from the nations intended, and will be confined to the dark and remote portions of the earth, during the thousand years, after which for a brief period efforts will be made to restore it, as shown in this and succeeding verses. During that period those systems of idolatry, falsehood, and oppression, personated by the dragon and Satan, will cease to operate to deceive the nations.

4. *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*—After, or simultaneously with, this suppression of false religion and despotic rule, which are usually leagued together, a new scene opens, viz. : the prevalence of true religion, and the enjoyment of its attendant blessings. *I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them.* What thrones these are, and who sat upon them, is made plain, as it seems to me, by Daniel, who says, (7 : 9,) *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, &c.* Scott remarks very truly, “This was spoken of the coming of the Lord to destroy the kingdom of the little horn, and to set up the kingdom of God on earth. Rome

will be wholly desolated, and her hierarchy abolished; every antichristian power will be crushed; and the whole will be reduced under the government of Christ, and those who rule under him and for him." In exact accordance with Daniel, John says, that judgment was given to them, that is, sentence was rendered against them;—they were condemned to be cast down, overthrown. The second adventists and others explain the passage to mean, that the saints are to be the occupants of those thrones, and that by judgment being given to them, is meant, that the saints are to sit in judgment on the rest of mankind, and rule over them. But, the writer is speaking of the suppression and removal of that which is wrong, evil, and oppressive; and not only the scope of the context, but the meaning of the word *krima*, which is "a judgment, a decision, a sentence, a condemnation—a penalty," shows, that sentence, condemnation, is rendered against them to their destruction. The prophetic announcement of Daniel concerning those thrones, is that of a terrible overthrow. He says that 'a fiery stream issued and came forth from before the Ancient of days:—thousand thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. And he beheld, till the beast, on whose head were ten horns, among which there sprang up the little horn, papacy, which spake great words, was *slain*, and his *body destroyed*, and given to the burning flame.' How evident it is, that this is the same thing with John's description in the previous chapter of the great conqueror, whose eyes were as a flame of fire, who in righteousness doth judge and make war, whose name is Faithful and True, and against whom the kings of the earth and their armies were arrayed,—the result of which was, that the beast and false prophet, were taken and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. The

idea of Daniel is, that *those thrones were occupied by oppressive kings*, and that they will be overthrown ; and that the governments represented by them will be destroyed. John expresses the same. The idea, that the saints are to occupy those thrones, and be associated with Christ in the business of judging and ruling, is all assumption, and most preposterous. And, so far is this from being the final judgment, the fact probably is, that these events are *soon to transpire* ; those thrones in catholic Europe are shaking ; and Daniel's fiery stream from before the Lord has begun to flow ; and ere long the body of the idolatrous and persecuting beast, will be "destroyed and given to the burning flame ;" or, as John expresses it, "be east alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone." Both prophets, the one in captivity in Babylon, the other in exile in Patmos, declare the destruction of idolatry, superstition and despotism, paganism and Antichrist, and the governments by which these are upheld. This part of the great drama of this world's affairs, if I mistake not, is soon to be enacted.

Mede, a learned English divine, who wrote on the Apocalypse more than two hundred years ago, remarks, with great propriety, "John does not affirm, that he saw the souls of those who were beheaded, *sitting upon thrones*. He says only he saw thrones, and those who sat upon them, not determining who they were who sat upon them, but making it sufficiently plain, that this is not to be understood of souls ; for the words employed do not admit of this interpretation." "The word for those to whom judgment was given, is in the masculine gender, (*autois*) but if John had meant to say, that the souls of the beheaded, were those to whom judgment was given, the word should have been in the feminine (*autais*)." Witsius makes the same criticism, and accompanies it with similar remarks.

That Daniel and John both predict the same events in

this instance, is proved by the fact, that both assign the same length of time for the continuance of the little horn or papacy, viz.: one thousand two hundred and sixty days, by which are meant years, which expire just about the present time. It is proved also by the fact, that both follow that destruction of that persecuting power with a prediction of the triumphant reign of Christ. The interpretation which the angel gave to Daniel at his earnest solicitation is this. 'The little horn which shall subdue three kings or kingdoms, shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws : and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion, (which John expresses by seizing the dragon and shutting him up in a pit), to consume and destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve him.' This glorious triumph of the saints, and the permanent establishment of the kingdom of the Most High over the earth, John describes and amplifies in the twentieth, twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of this book.

Another, and a distinct portion of the vision, which introduces a new subject, standing in immediate connection with the former, is now given.

*I saw the souls of those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, &c.* Here a distinct class of persons is presented. Both in the old and new testaments and in numerous instances, the term *souls* means *persons*. Gen. 46 : 26. 'All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, besides his son's wives, all the souls were threescore and six.' Acts 27 : 37. 'And we were in all in the ship two hundred

three score and sixteen souls.' The persons meant are described as those, who were beheaded on account of the testimony they gave for Christ, and for their maintenance of the word of God in opposition to the errors, superstitions and idolatry of Antichrist. For they were those, who had not submitted to and revered the beast, the Roman civil power, nor his image, the papacy, neither had received his mark, the papal idolatrous worship. (See explanation of chap. 13 : 16-18.) In a word, they are those who believed, obeyed, and propagated the gospel of Christ in the midst of corruption of Christianity ; and who had suffered persecution and death for their fidelity.

*These lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* How, in what respects, and where will those persons live and reign? The analogy of the book and the structure of the context require, that this be understood metaphorically. The word (*czesau*) translated *they lived*, signifies also, '*to flourish, to enjoy life, to be prosperous.*' The apostle does not say, that the martyred saints were raised from the dead, and their souls united again to material bodies, or to spiritual bodies. He says simply, that he saw the souls of those who were beheaded, and they *lived* and reigned with Christ. The learned Witsius remarks, that the apostle does not say, "the men who were beheaded lived *again* ; far less that the bodies of the beheaded lived *again* on the earth. He asserts merely, that he saw the souls of them that were beheaded, not living *again*, but *living* ; that is, filled with unceasing joy, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob live to God ; and reigning with Christ in the kingdom of glory, where they reap the fruit of their labors and death, whilst they behold the enlargement of the church these thousand years."

Making a distinction between these and those who did not worship the beast nor his image, he says, "These also *lived*,

enjoying a blessed peace of conscience and a rich abundance of spiritual consolation. Not that their lives as individuals extended to a thousand years, for this never was, and never will be the lot of any mortal, but men of that description reigned during many successive ages, till the appointed period."

It is not evident that the apostle intends two classes of persons here, but it is quite evident that he does not say, nor intend to say of those who suffered martyrdom long ago, that they lived and reigned with Christ personally on earth.

Without approving or censuring the discordant opinions of others, I suggest the following as the interpretation of this much controverted passage. The true meaning will not be likely to be ascertained, if one part be taken in a literal sense, and another part in the same connection and of the same character, be taken in a metaphorical sense. One general rule, made necessary by the structure of the book, must govern us.

Now, let it be recollected, that the killing of the two witnesses, as stated in chapter the eleventh, and the exposure of their dead bodies in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, was not a literal *killing*, nor were the two witnesses, two particular individuals, nor did the transaction occur in the city of Sodom, which was destroyed long before the Christian era; and as to Egypt, there never was a city of that name in that country. But the killing and exposure of their dead bodies to insult is wholly metaphorical, having a moral and political signification only. The witnesses were a succession of numerous and faithful defenders of gospel truth in opposition to the errors and superstitions which prevailed. Their restoration to life and ascension to heaven was their



restoration to the enjoyment of civil and religious privileges under the protection of government.

So in the case before us, the *beheading* and the *living and reigning*. are not to be understood literally. For, why should those who lost their lives in that particular manner and at a particular time, be singled out and distinguished from the vastly greater number, who have been put to death in all the horrible methods which ingenuity could devise? I can conceive of no reason for such a distinction.

But, if we will maintain the correspondence between this and the preceding verses, and consider that the writer is now showing the improved and happy state of things after the eradication of false religion and civil despotism, expressed by the binding and incarceration of the dragon, we obtain a consistent view of the whole. I would express my understanding of it in a kind of paraphrase, thus,—I saw those who had been oppressed, deprived of their rights, civil and religious, and held in obscurity and subjection; relieved from this state of oppression, living in the enjoyment of their rights, and happy under equitable governments and Christian privileges. The cause they espoused flourished,—rose superior to all opposition, and held the ascendancy. Thus will they *live and reign* with Christ. The spirit of martyrs and confessors of former ages will animate them in this proximate period of a thousand years. This, as I conceive, is coincident with what has preceded, and preserves the harmony and connection of the events predicted.

Just in this metaphorical sense of beheading, are similar words employed in this book and elsewhere. For instance, in the ninth chapter it is said that the four angels who were bound in or *by* the river Euphrates, “were prepared to *slay* a third part of men,” and in a subsequent verse it is said, “a third part of men were *killed*.” Now, if this be taken

literally, it is not true, for there never was a time, when a third part of men have been killed. They were killed *politically*, being brought under the dominion of those fierce invaders, the Turks.

Instances of this beheading there have been recently in the case of the persecuted Portuguese of Madeira, who have fled to our country to save their lives. Faithful Christians like them, who may suffer in a similar manner, will ere long *live and reign* with Christ in the sense of being happy in the enjoyment of civil and religious privileges, and in participating in the supremacy of pure Christianity.

Precisely of this nature is the vision of Ezekiel. The dry bones in the midst of the valley were the whole house of Israel, who were represented as *slain*. Then said the Lord, 'Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.' What does this slaying mean? What do those bones exceeding dry, overspreading the valley, signify? What does the resurrection of those dead decayed bodies, when 'breath came into them, and they *lived*, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army,' mean? Their being conquered, subdued, carried away into captivity to Babylon among idolaters, and deprived of their religious institutions, and their subsequent restoration to their own country, and their being made prosperous and happy in the enjoyment of civil and religious privileges again, is the answer. It was a *political death* and a *political resurrection*, involving their religious interests, and nothing more.

I understand John to use language just as the ancient prophets did; and that in this fourth verse, he predicts that at a particular period, probably not far distant, the oppressed, persecuted, down-trodden, abused servants of

Christ, will enjoy freedom, rights of conscience, happiness, and prosperity, and will see and participate in the supremacy of Christ's cause for a thousand years. The writer, or rather the revealing angel, carries forward the religious and political affairs of the nations together, because they are so blended, that whatever affects the one, has an important influence and effect upon the other.

5. *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*—The rest of the dead, who lived not again during the thousand years, are those who, under the same system of civil and religious absolutism, do not stand for personal rights and Christian truth; those who sustain the old order of things; those who are destitute of the spirit of the devoted, persecuted, and crushed servants of Christ. These opposers, infidels, pagans, enemies of pure Christianity, lived not again till the thousand years were finished. Here *lived* is to be taken in the same sense as explained above. As if it had been said, They once flourished and were prosperous. They had power and used it oppressively. They had riches and used them luxuriously. But, the state of things will be entirely changed in the thousand years when false religion and despotism will be suppressed. Such as they are, will not be in power. They will not bear rule; and they will have no successors. There will be none who sustain their antichristianity; none who will defend the errors and superstitions they cherished; none, who will persecute the followers of Christ as they did. The events just previously predicted, will destroy their power, and their cause can never flourish again. See Daniel 7 : 26, 27.

*This is the first resurrection.* It should be recollected that all which is contained in this and the three preceding chapters, belongs to the period of the seventh vial; and is

an expanded view of what is announced in general terms in the latter part of the sixteenth chapter. It should also be borne in mind, that this first resurrection, whatever be the nature of it, relates to the defenders of pure Christianity, and civil freedom.

It is readily perceived that the term *first resurrection* is only a name given to the events predicted at the close of the preceding verse. What those events are, I have endeavored to show. It is not then a *literal* but a *metaphorical* resurrection. It is the living and reigning with Christ in a moral and political sense, as their beheading is to be understood in that sense.

Why is this styled the *first* resurrection? Not because it is a literal resurrection of the saints to precede the general raising of the dead. This would be affirming two resurrections. But Christ and his apostles have told us of no more than one literal resurrection of the dead. Besides, if a literal meaning be given to the several particulars contained in the fourth verse, on which many insist, it cuts off their favorite idea of a premillennial resurrection of *all* the saints, and even of all the *martyred* saints. For John speaks only of those who were *beheaded*; and it will not do to extend this phrase so as to embrace all the martyrs; least of all will it do for *literalists* to stretch the meaning so entirely beyond the import of the term.

Nowhere in scripture is a *second* resurrection mentioned. But, if there be a literal *first* resurrection, there must be a literal *second*. The term *first*, therefore, has no reference to a literal *numerical second*, for there is none such. Among all the numerous passages in the New Testament, which speak of the resurrection, this place is the only one where this phrase occurs. Everywhere else, the literal resurrection of those who have died, is spoken of as one event. Christ said, 'Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in

which *all* who are in their graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they who have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.' The remark of Paul to the Thessalonians, that 'The dead in Christ shall rise first,' means simply, that the dead in Christ will be raised before those who are alive on the earth will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. To the Corinthians he said, 'Every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterward they who are Christ's at his coming.' This is only a mention of the particular order in which the *one* resurrection will take place.

Why, then, is this symbolic resurrection styled the *first* ? Because, as it seems to me, it will be the first deliverance which the nations of the empire will experience from a false and tyrannical religion ; and a deliverance also from civil oppression, with which it is conjoined. I say, the nations of the empire ; for I consider these visions as relating to them. This will be the first time, that the friends of true religion and free government there, will obtain that full and undisputed reign with Christ, which consists in the enjoyment of all those rights and privileges, which the gospel and the reign of Christ are designed to give to mankind. It will be the first general emancipation of the mind from the shackles of superstition, error, and tyranny in those nations since the Christian era. Who does not know, that these hold absolute sway in Italy, Greece, Spain, Austria, and all Roman and Greek catholic countries, notwithstanding all that the reformation has done for others ? What a proof of this do we have in the recent events pertaining to the short-lived republic of Rome, and the crushed Hungarians !

In this first resurrection, the Jews, as we believe, will be participants ; will be restored to the land of their fathers ;

will acknowledge Christ as the Messiah, and become an integral part of his church. This will be as *life from the dead*.

The term *first* may have a further signification in this instance, viz: peculiar eminence, highest importance. The Greek word is defined to mean "the most eminent, most illustrious, the principal." This alone is a sufficient reason for its use.

Now, if we admit that the *first* resurrection implies a *second*, we are prepared to show what is that second. Evidently the second must correspond to, or be of a like nature with the first, unless a difference is plainly indicated. It seems to me, that we have this second resurrection distinctly stated in the following verses. It is declared, that after the thousand years shall have expired, Satan will be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the *land*, the Roman earth, just as he has done in former ages. Here again is the same old dragon, serpent, devil and Satan, the instigator and representative of false religion and tyranny; and his being loosed signifies, that he will be permitted to make mighty efforts to revive the old errors, superstitions, and idolatries; and the old oppressive forms of government.

Then there will be another signal manifestation of the power and grace of God in behalf of his cause and people. The enemies of true religion and human welfare will be destroyed as the beast and false prophet were, by being overwhelmed with various troubles and calamities; or by direct and awful judgments of God, called, verse ninth, 'fire sent down from God out of heaven.' Then comes the *second symbolic resurrection*, as described in verses 11, 12, 13, viz.: the deliverance of the people from moral and political degradation and the perpetual enjoyment of the full bless-

ings of Messiah's reign; all that is signified by the new heavens and new earth, and the making of all things new.

6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*—This verse declares the happy condition of those who will participate in the blessings and privileges included in the first resurrection. The term *blessed* is used here as in numerous other passages instead of *happy*. Thus, Blessed, or as we might read it, Happy are the poor in spirit, &c. They are *holy* as well as happy. Holy as being set apart and consecrated to the service of God, and holy because subjects of the Spirit's influence.

*On such the second death, &c.* What is meant by the *second death*? Is it literal or metaphorical? I think it is the latter. Not that I would in the least countenance the error, that the wicked will not suffer hereafter, the penalty threatened in the divine law. But, it is unwise to attempt to support that solemn truth with passages of scripture which have no reference to it.

We have seen in the preceding context, the prediction of the first death or destruction of the supporters of false religion and civil despotism; and also the first resurrection of the friends of true religion and civil freedom. Each is to be followed by a *second* alike in its nature, and pertaining to the same nations. *The second death will be the second overthrow of the supporters of false religions, corruptions of Christianity, and all despotism in church and state.* This is described in the ninth and tenth verses.

The nature of the second death may be perceived in the fact, that it stands in contrast with the succeeding clause; —*but they shall be priests of God, &c.* It is the negative of what is there positively asserted. The *negative* part of

the antithesis is, *on such the second death hath no power*, or permission to hurt. The *positive* part is what follows,—*But they shall be priests. &c., and shall reign with him a thousand years.* Now, this positive part clearly refers to their privileges and blessings in this world; for there can be no occasion for any to be priests to God to offer prayers and sacrifices in the heavenly world. The scriptures do not teach, that there will be praying where the condition of all will be fixed, and where all will be filled with peace and blessedness. Further still, their reign with Christ is to be for a thousand years, which all understand to relate to the church in this world. In heaven the saints will reign not merely a thousand years, but forever and ever.

The conclusion is legitimate and unavoidable, that the second death is something which is to transpire in this world, as is the first and second resurrection with which it is contrasted. It is the second destruction of all that is meant by the beast, the false prophet, and the dragon, under God's judgments, which will be like 'fire out of heaven;' like the fire which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, to which probably there is allusion. These judgments will not harm or affect injuriously those, who are pronounced happy and holy,—the friends of truth and equity, who participate in the privileges and mercies of the first resurrection. As Lot escaped from Sodom, and the disciples and their believing brethren from Jerusalem previous to its destruction, in obedience to the warning of Christ; so these will be safe while the enemies of God, of true religion, and of human rights, will be overwhelmed, and their cause destroyed.

To be *priests of God and of Christ*, is to be honored with free access and intimate communion with the Godhead. The Jewish priests were appointed to offer prayers and sacrifices, and to them was granted the privilege of



entering the holy place, of coming near to the Lord, and ministering before him. Such is now the privilege of all believers, and in the millennium, as it seems to be here intimated, this privilege will be very highly prized, and be eminently enjoyed. To his believing brethren Peter wrote, saying, 'Ye are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' By him all believers have freedom of access to the mercy-seat, as did the priests under the former dispensation. They will reign with Christ, or *by and through him, in that coming period, because pure Christianity, with all its attendant blessings, will have supremacy.* Instead of being oppressed, despised, and persecuted as in former ages; the ruling power, the control of civil and religious affairs, will be in their hands. Christians will hold the reins of government, and will regulate public matters by the principles of the gospel. Of the church God hath said, 'The forces of the Gentiles, and their kings shall be brought to thee. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish, yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.' The church of Christ is to have the preeminence, and will exert its appropriate influence for all that is good, humane, and excellent.

7 and 8. *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*—After this season of brightness, a portentous storm gathers, and again the scene changes. The old deceiver is released from his confinement, and is permitted to resume his former work of blinding and deceiving mankind. The human heart will be the seat of the same depravity as ever, and this is shown

by the fresh manifestation of hostility to the holy religion of the gospel, and the pure and spiritual worship of God. All that will be good and beautiful in the millennium, will be the effect of the extraordinary power of the Spirit, making the means of salvation effectual ; and is not to be attributed to anything connate in men. This new development of hostility to Christianity and its purifying and elevating institutions, does not appear, however, to be an apostasy on the part of those, who have enjoyed them ; but rather proceeds from nations who have lived in a heathenish state during the thousand years. What nations these are, is made quite evident by the names given to them, which are Gog and Magog. In the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel, these hostile nations are represented as making a combined attack on the people of God : and their entire discomfiture and destruction is foretold. Ezekiel says this shall be “in the latter days;” and it is conceded, that these are the same events which John predicts to transpire after the thousand years. The nations and tribes included under those names, were anciently called Scythians, and inhabited the northern and northeastern portion of Asia, embracing that vast territory which includes Independent and Chinese Tartary, Tibet, and Siberia. This has been so often and so satisfactorily proved by the ablest writers, that we take it as indisputable. Ezekiel joins Persia, Ethiopia, and Lybia with these. It may be, that under these various nations, are included all the enemies of pure Christianity wherever found. In the writings of the apostles the word *ethnos*, nation, is used to signify any who are neither Jews nor Christians. As Satan, the genius of evil, the fabricator of lying vanities, the personification of idolatry, and despotism, will be set at liberty, and renew his efforts to deceive the nations ; I understand the meaning to be, that great ingenuity and energy will be employed

against true religion and civil freedom, and for the reestablishment of the old forms of idolatry and tyranny, or others resembling them. Vast numbers, compared with the grains of sand on the sea-shore, will join in this atrocious conspiracy against the kingdom of Christ.

9. *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*—These countless hosts are represented as making a simultaneous invasion of the land, encompassing the camp of the saints, and the beloved city, as if determined on reducing all to their authority. Ezekiel says, ‘they shall come from their place out of the north parts, and many people with them, sitting upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: And they will come against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days.’ I think, that the allusion is still to that part of Christendom, which constituted the Roman empire at the time in which John wrote. The camp of the saints is a figure drawn probably from the encampment of the Israelites, when the Lord led them through the wilderness; and the beloved city is Jerusalem, both, in this instance, symbolizing the Christian church. This formidable demonstration against Christianity, though represented by an invasion of a country and the besieging of a city, may be continued through a considerable period of time before the fearful crisis, here predicted, shall come.

When the Christian cause shall be thus assailed, and be put in imminent peril, God will remarkably interpose to save it from ruin, and to deliver his people from their enemies. This is expressed in the style of this whole book, figuratively, by *fire coming down from God out of heaven*. This may be an allusion to what took place in the camp of

the Israelites, when the two hundred and fifty princes were destroyed for their opposition to Moses and Aaron. '*Fire came out from the presence of the Lord, and consumed them.*' More than two thousand four hundred years ago, Ezekiel gave, from the Lord, a sublime and graphic prediction of this destruction of these enemies of Christianity. 'It shall come to pass when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord, that my fury shall come up into my face. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and upon his bands, and upon the many people with him an overflowing rain, and great hail stones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself, and the nations shall know, that I am the Lord.' How evident it is, that John uses the figures of the ancient prophets and with the same signification. Here we have the whole array of the most destructive elements,—pestilence, war, rain, hailstones, fire, and brimstone, all combined to express the most terrible judgments of the Lord, like those which he sent upon Egypt;—judgments to be inflicted in this world upon the adversaries of his righteous cause.

10. *And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.*—The destruction of the enemies of Christianity is attended with the destruction of their antichristian heathenish principles and practices. This is expressed symbolically by casting the devil into the lake of fire and brimstone, just as the beast and false prophet were. Here the name *devil* seems to be used as embracing those who are influenced by him, and believe the destructive errors of which he is the inventor, and do his will in propagating them. For, beyond question, there is in all these names a reference to that apos-

tate spirit, who is the enemy of all righteousness ;—whom Paul calls, ‘The Prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience.’ In these visions, he seems to be the impersonation of antichristianism, heathenism, and despotism, those mighty evils, by which the great mass of mankind have ever been deluded, led into the grossest errors, and held fast in those errors, with an all-controlling power. And, I have no doubt, that the design of the writer *throughout this entire chapter*, is like that of the ancient prophets, to show the utter and *final* destruction of those monstrous, long-continued, wide-spread evils. This, I trust, will be made to appear, as we proceed.

*The lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and false prophet are*, is a plain declaration, that it is identical with that mentioned in the twentieth verse of the preceding chapter. See the explanation there given. Similar language is employed by Isaiah in describing the destruction of the Assyrian army under Sennacherib which came against Jerusalem. “The Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and *with the flame of a devouring fire*, with scattering and tempest, and hailstones.” Isa. 30 : 30. This is explained by the record of the facts in the nineteenth chapter of the second book of Kings. “It came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand.” This may serve as an illustration of the passage under consideration. On the above words of Isaiah, Scott very properly remarks:—“The ruin of all antichristian powers, in order to the final triumph of the gospel, seems likewise to be intended.”

*Shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.* To be tormented means to be greatly distressed, as people are

when they are involved in calamities, and are filled with self-reproach and fear. The same thing is said of the worshippers of the beast and his image in the fourteenth chapter. 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night.' I have shown there, that John adopts the language of Isaiah in which he predicts the destruction of Edom.

So in the case before us. The devil, who is the representative of those who support false religion and tyranny, will be filled with vexation, shame, and fear, night and day, *i.e.*, without intermission, and for a period of great length.

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*Events preparatory to the New Heaven and a New Earth.*

THE uniform construction put upon the remaining verses of this chapter, is, that they predict the second personal coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, the end of the world, and the doom of the impenitent. It may seem rash to go against what may be regarded as the universal opinion of Christendom.

That there will be a second personal advent of Jesus Christ, a resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment, I hold to be unequivocally taught in the New Testament. But, that those momentous facts are predicted here, is what I am not prepared to admit. To admit it, would be to depart entirely from the analogy of the book; and, without any show of reason to drop the metaphorical, and assume the literal signification.

11. *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and*

*there was found no place for them.*—A throne is an emblem of governmental authority, of sovereign rule. The qualifying epithets, *great and shining*, seem to give intensity to the meaning, as being of peculiar importance, and the government indicated, as most equitable and perfect. Though we are not told who sat upon the throne; yet from the scope of what is said, we infer, that it was Christ himself, styled previously, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Having been foreshown by successive panoramic scenes, the destruction of heathenism, papacy, religious and political despotism, with their attendant evils, I think we are now to be shown the reign of Christ in the fullness of its glory on earth.

John's vision of this great shining throne no more implies the second coming of Christ, than his vision of a throne in heaven and one seated upon it, as related in the fourth chapter. It no more suggests a personal advent, than does his beholding heaven opened, and a white horse, and him who sat upon it, called Faithful and True. Not a word is said here about the second appearing of Christ, nor is his name mentioned; and all that commentators and others have written to this effect, is an inference of their own. Regarding the nature of symbolic language, I conceive the simple idea to be, that at the period intended, *there will be a signal manifestation of the power, the sovereignty and the grace of the great King*, in the wonderful events and changes, which the writer goes on to detail. For a parallel, see Isaiah's vision of "the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up," when he was commissioned to prophesy most important events concerning Israel. Isa. 6 : 1. See also, that magnificent symbolic display of the wisdom, power, and sovereignty of God to Ezekiel; when among other things he beheld "the likeness of a throne, as the appear-

ance of a sapphire-stone, and upon the likeness of the throne the likeness of a man." Ezek. 1.

From the face of him who sat on the throne, John says, *the heaven and the earth fled away ; and there was found no place for them.* Now, if this should be understood literally, and surely it has the same claim to be so understood, as that which precedes and follows it ; then, not only our earth is to fly from its orbit and vanish into nothingness ; but also heaven itself, the expanse over our heads, or the place of the blessed, is to be annihilated, so that it will nowhere be found. Is such a thing to be imagined ? Is this reconcilable with the analogy of divine providence, and with other portions of divine truth ? I think not. What then is the sentiment expressed by the disappearance of the earth and heaven ?

Without repeating the definition so often given of the terms, *earth and heaven*, I would say, that it is the cessation of the old order of things, preparatory to the introduction of one which is far better. It is the incipient stage of an entire change in the moral, social, and governmental condition of the people.

So spake the ancient prophets. Predicting the destruction of Edom, Isaiah says, 'The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off the vine. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven, it shall come down upon Idumea.' Bishop Lowth thinks, that "this prophecy has a further view to some great revolutions to be effected in the latter times, antecedent to that more perfect state of the kingdom of God on earth, and serving to introduce it."

John uses the same symbolical language in the sixth chapter of this book, where, as is generally admitted, he predicts the great change in the Roman empire from paganism to Christianity. The old systems of error, supersti-



tion, and oppression, which have blinded, and degraded mankind, will be swept away, and so completely, that *no place will be found for them.*

12. *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*—All, who are acquainted with the contents of the Bible know, that the prophets, Christ, and the apostles use the terms *dead* and *death* in a moral and political sense, signifying a state of sinfulness, oppression, and degradation. See instances already quoted, Isa. 26 : 19. Ezek. 37 : 1–14. Christ said, “As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.” In the same conversation he reaffirmed this in these words, ‘The hour is coming and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and *they who hear* shall live.’ John 5 : 21, 25. These are the spiritually dead, who were made spiritually alive by the truth and by the Spirit of Christ. “*Dead* in trespasses and sin,”—“*dead* to sin,”—“*dead* with Christ,”—“if one died for all, then were *all dead*,” are instances of the use of this term in a moral sense. See explanation of the fifth verse of this chapter.

*Great and small* is a descriptive phrase, meaning persons of every *rank and condition*, not persons of different ages. And this is proof, that these are not the literally dead; nor is this as is generally supposed, a literal resurrection, for that will include persons of all ages.

These persons of every rank *stand before God*. This is commonly understood to be the arraignment for the last judgment. Of course, here again, contrary to the scope of the prediction and the analogy of the book, the literal

meaning is adopted. I am constrained to dissent entirely from such an interpretation. If any one's recollection does not suffice to show them how the word *stand* is used in the scriptures, let him turn to Cruden's Concordance, for instances showing its use. 'The Lord will *stand* at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.' Ps. 109 : 31. That is, the Lord will help and protect the poor. 'The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he *stand*;' that is, he shall be approved, made secure, and prosperous. Isa. 32 : 8. 'Who shall *stand* when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.' Mal. 3 : 2; *i.e.*, Who will be approved as good and faithful? 'Watch, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, that shall come to pass, and to *stand* before the Son of man, Luke 21 : 36. That is, worthy to escape from the evils coming on Jerusalem and the Jews, and to be approved, vindicated, and protected by the Son of man. Directly in point is Ezekiel's manner of expressing the restoration of the Israelites to their own land and to their civil and religious privileges;—'breath came into the dry bones, and they lived, and *stood up* upon their feet, an exceeding great army.' What then is the idea expressed by the Christian prophet? It is, that persons of every rank and condition, who are in a state of moral and political death, will be raised up from their unhappy condition, and will be vindicated, protected and favored by God. At that period, when the old state of things shall vanish, God will vindicate the rights of all classes of people, and establish them in the permanent enjoyment of those blessings, which the reign of Christ on earth is designed to confer.

*And the books were opened.* These are commonly considered to be the registers of the actions of mankind, according to which the final judgment will be given.

Daniel, prophesying perhaps, of these events, says, 'The judgment was set *and the books were opened.*' But it is perfectly plain, that he does not speak of the general judgment; for he is describing what will take place just previous to the giving to Christ, the dominion, and glory, and kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages may serve him. This is precisely what John is showing in this place.

What then are these books? Surely not account books, which it is supposed, God keeps for recording human actions. He needs no such books. But, they are those, which contain the statutes, instructions, and precepts by which the people are to regulate their conduct. They are those sources of knowledge, which are needful for the people, making them acquainted with their relations and duties to themselves and to God.

These books being open indicates, that the sources of knowledge will be open and accessible to all. Their contents will be for the benefit of those persons of all classes just spoken of. Thus, in the fifth chapter, the book sealed with seven seals, which no one except the Lamb was found worthy to open, signifies, that its contents were not made known, and that it belonged to Christ alone to make them known. Again in the tenth chapter, the little open book purports, that its contents were to be at once communicated. An open book is an appropriate emblem for the diffusion of knowledge. In the latter times we are told that "knowledge shall be increased," yea, says Isaiah, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."

*And another book was opened, which is the book of life.* The Bible is the book of life. '*The words which I speak unto you, said Christ, are spirit, and they are life.*' The gospel brings life and immortality to light;—it shows the way of life, and its truths are the means of producing life in the soul. It portrays the work of redemption,—the

method which God hath taken to bestow justification and life upon the guilty and perishing. It also prescribes the rules by which we should regulate all our feelings and actions so as to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

*This book was opened.* At that future period to which this refers, the precious instructions of the Bible will be free to all. Those things which now obstruct the diffusion of the truth, will be taken out of the way, and then the Bible will be disseminated, and read, and understood. Then, all will know the Lord from the least to the greatest. Then small and great will *stand* upright before God,—will be raised up from their crushed and wretched condition, and will experience his protection and favor. The book of life opened for the perusal of all, and unsealed, so that it will be understood by all, will be one principal means of that glorious reformation, whose happy scenes are depicted in the following chapters.

*And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* It is generally thought, that the term *judged* in this place makes it unquestionable, that the final judgment is meant. But, commonly in the old Testament from which this whole figurative language is drawn, the term is used to signify the exercise of government, the act of ruling, and also the act of vindicating. I give a few examples.—Deborah *judged* Israel at that time. Tola *judged* Israel twenty-three years. Jair *judged*—twenty-two years; Jephtha—six years; Sampson—twenty years; and so of Samuel and many others. David says, Ps. 67 : 4, ‘Thou shalt *judge* the people righteously;’ that is, *govern* them in equity. Again, 96 : 13, ‘The Lord shall *judge*, i.e., rule the world with righteousness and the people with his truth.’ This is directly in point, for it evidently refers to the very period of which John is speaking. The psalm is a sublime song of praise

for the spread of the knowledge of the glory of God through the world, and for his reign over all people.

To be judged *out of the things written in the books*, is to be governed according to the statutes, precepts, and ordinances contained in them. It is to make these the rules by which the people are to regulate their conduct, and by which the government is to be administered. The people will be governed equitably, righteously, because they will be dealt with according to their works. Thus will it be under the glorious reign of the Son of God in that future period.

13. *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.— And the sea gave up the dead which were in it.* The sea is an emblem of nations in a state of commotion, contention, or anarchy, either without proper laws and institutions, or regardless of them. These nations, whether heathen or civilized, will yield up their *dead*, viz., their ignorant, irreligious, oppressed people, to be *governed* by the righteous principles contained in the books. Instead of being turbulent, heathenish and rebellious, they will yield a willing subjection to the mild and equitable reign of the Prince of peace.

*And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.* The word for hell in this place is *hades*, which is not that used for the place of future punishment. If we would know what is meant by death and hell here, we must observe the manner in which John himself uses the phrase. It occurs in the sixth chapter in describing the events under the fourth seal, thus: ‘Behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.’ Now this describes the dreadful state of the Roman empire under heathen rulers, from Commodus to Philipppus, when

internal commotions, wars, massacres, and most barbarous persecution of Christians characterized the times. There were twenty emperors and thirty usurpers in fifty years. John himself furnishes the key to the explanation, by saying, that 'power was given to Death and Hell to kill with sword, with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.' In reference to this, Woodhull says, "To profess pure religion became a crime. Severe and murderous laws were enacted against those who deviated from the standard of doctrine established by corrupt rulers. Whole nations of Christians were subjugated or extirpated." This horrible state of things is expressed by Death on a pale horse and Hell following; fit emblems truly to express the rampant domination of heathenism and tyranny; and the practice of relentless persecution and murder, attended with various tortures, too revolting to be described.

It is readily perceived and is admitted, that in these cases Death and Hades are personifications of great public evils, and a great sacrifice of life. As personal beings, they are represented as having authority and power over a portion of mankind, viz., those who are held in a state of moral and political degradation, called for that reason, *the dead*. These unhappy subjects of theirs, they surrender to a higher authority, to be dealt with in a different manner. *They were judged every man according to his works, i.e.,* they will be ruled over according to the principles of equity, and every one will be treated as he deserves. In this coming reign of righteousness, no wrong will be inflicted on any, and all will stand on their own merits.

14. *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*—Here the evidence is conclusive, that these terms are not used in a literal sense. Let us ask, what is death? It is not a personage, nor a substance;

but simply an event—the cessation of life. How can an event be cast into a lake of fire? And what is hell or hades? It is the invisible world, the place of departed spirits. How can that be cast into a lake of fire? Plainly all is symbolical. The lake of fire is that which we have repeatedly explained it to be, viz., the experience of great troubles and desolating calamities.

Death and Hell, considered as beings, are represented as cast into that lake; that is, the wretched state of things, which those terms symbolize, will be destroyed by signal visitations of divine justice and power; in other words, religious errors, superstition, and idolatry, social evils, contention and anarchy, with political evils, oppressions and wrongs, will be destroyed by the spiritual and providential means, which God will then employ. *This is the second death*; the second and final destruction of those mighty evils. The *first* was previous to the thousand years; but was partial both as to completeness and extent. *This* will be complete and entire. The earth will be purged of the evils, with which mankind have been afflicted, through all preceding ages, and these verses describe the purifying process. Death, says the Vocabulary of Symbolical Language, “*is the extinction of moral or political existence.*” This second death is the second destruction, the final extinction of those moral and political evils, by which mankind have been degraded besotted, and ruined.

If it be objected, that this is giving a signification to the term death in this last clause, different from that in the first clause where it is coupled with hell, I reply, that so John uses the word in the two places. By no rational interpretation can they be made to signify the same. To say that the death, which is to be cast into a lake of fire, is the second death, is to speak unintelligible nonsense. And the manner in which commentators have passed over these ex-

pressions, shows that they felt conscious, that their mixed literal and metaphorical mode of interpretation, is at least questionable.

If it be doubted, whether death is used in the senses which I have given to it, then let the Bible decide. I have said, that in the one case, it means the state of ignorance, obscurity, heathenism, destitution of Christian privileges and of the blessings of an equitable government. The following are a few out of many *inspired* examples. Job said, ‘The Lord poureth contempt upon princes; he discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the *shadow of death*.’ Again, ‘He setteth an end to darkness, and the *shadow of death*.’ David said, ‘Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.’ The previous verses, particularly the eleventh, in which it is declared, ‘Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat: thou hast *scattered us among the heathen*,’ show plainly what the ‘*place of dragons*, and *shadow of death*,’ mean. Ps. 44 : 19. Again, in Psalms 107 : 10 and 14, it is written, ‘Such as sit in darkness and in the *shadow of death*, being bound in affliction and iron.’ ‘He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands asunder.’ Isaiah says, (9 : 2,) ‘The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.’ Also Matt. 4 : 16, and Luke 1 : 79. Thus said the Lord by Jeremiah, ‘Give glory to the Lord your God, lest while ye look for light, he turn it into the *shadow of death*, and make it *gross darkness*.’ How manifest it is, that John uses the word *death* in the sense of the above writers, as meaning a state of ignorance, depression, destitution, and suffering. Accordant with this, as I have shown repeatedly, is the phrase, *the dead*. *The second death* expresses simply the



idea of destruction or extinction, viz.: of those terrible evils with which the world has been cursed.

15. *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*—The books are those which prescribe the rules of human action. Not to be found written in them, is not to have a character correspondent with what is required. It is to pursue a course of conduct opposite to the principles prescribed. Those who are guilty of such disobedience, will experience those calamities and distresses, with which God will finally purify the world. For then ‘the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.’

The preceding verses from the eleventh, as I understand them, do not refer to the final judgment at all, nor to the end of the world. The end of the world is not mentioned, nor even intimated. There has seemed to be an universal determination throughout Christendom, to put the end of all sublunary things here. But, my belief is, that God has determined far otherwise. I have no doubt, that he has great and glorious things to accomplish in this world beyond the period with which this chapter closes. There is in these verses no intimation of the second advent of Christ;—none of the concomitants of that great event are mentioned;—no voice of an archangel; no retinue of mighty angels is announced; no glorious appearing of the Son of God is affirmed. From the mode of expression we should conclude, that the object which principally engaged the attention of John at the moment, was the great shining throne, which is an emblem of an equitable, perfect government. This government, wielded by Him who occupied the throne, he goes on to show will work an entire change, a most aus-

picious change in the social, political and spiritual condition of men, preparatory to the bright scenes in the succeeding chapters.

A reason for fixing the time for the final judgment and the end of the world at the close of the thousand years, seems to have been, that it could not be perceived, what other time could be fixed upon for those great events. And the universal impression, produced by a misunderstanding of other passages in the New Testament, has been, that those events are somewhat near at hand. That mistaken notion has probably had its influence to produce the erroneous interpretation, which makes these verses to designate the coming of Christ, the last judgment, and the closing of the world's great drama. Hence, the question which is so often put. If this be not the time for those august transactions, when will it be? I have only to answer, that God has nowhere taught us when it will be : and I regard it as highly presumptuous for any man to undertake to specify the time. That the time will be according to the popular belief, at the close of the thousand years, I see no reason to admit. On the other hand, I see weighty reasons for repudiating that belief. These reasons will appear in the exegesis of the remaining chapters.

Yet, here I may ask, why, after the brief period of seven thousand years, should this wonderfully constructed world be struck out of existence? Why should sin have so long a reign, and the kingdom of Christ set up to destroy it, scarcely attain ascendancy at all? A careful and candid examination of what is here said of the thousand years, does not show them to be years of such spiritual perfection, which they have been represented to be, by any means. All that is affirmed, or that can be properly inferred, concerning that period is, that there will then be a suppression

of certain evils, and a large degree of prosperity given to true religion.

And, is this all, that Christ will do for his church and kingdom in the world? Can this be reconciled with the infinitely benevolent design of his mission? Is Satan to be the god of this world till just about the close of its duration? When somewhat more than a thousand years shall have passed, is this earth, so beautifully adorned, and so full of evil, to be struck from its orbit, and be dismissed from the sisterhood of planets in our system? Did the travail of the Redeemer's soul mean no more than this; and will he accomplish no more than this? Let those believe this who will; but I can never admit, that such will be the termination of this world's affairs.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### *The New Heaven and New Earth.*

THE preceding chapter closes with the presentation of the great changes which will be made under the perfect government of Messiah, which government is symbolized by a great shining throne. The mighty evils which have cursed mankind being swept away, and correct principles relating to human welfare in this life and that which is to come, being universally diffused and understood, we come to the last act in the great drama of divine providence concerning our world. New scenes now open, bright, cheering and glorious. The mind, pained and sickened with contemplating human degradation and wretchedness, turns to those scenes with delight, and the soul feels the refreshing influence of them, even at this large distance.

It is the commonly received opinion, that what is portrayed in this and the succeeding chapter relates exclusively to heaven. The new Jerusalem is considered to be the heavenly city, and poets have sung of it as the eternal and "happy home" of the saints. This view of the matter results necessarily from the error of understanding what immediately precedes, as the end of the world; for what but the scenes of eternity are to follow the end of time and of all sublunary things? But, there are many particulars in these two chapters, which cannot with propriety be attributed to heaven and the eternal state of the blessed. On the face of the description it is apparent, that these are scenes to be realized on this terrestrial theater of human affairs. I have no doubt, that these are the scenes briefly but brilliantly exhibited by the ancient prophets; that in those scenes will be the fulfillment of what Daniel said concerning the stone which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth; which he interprets to be that kingdom, which shall break in pieces, *and consume all other kingdoms, and which shall stand forever.* It is not a little remarkable, that as John employs the same emblems, and appears to predict the same events, as do the ancient prophets, it should have been so uniformly agreed, that they speak of the kingdom of Christ in this world, but that he refers to the heavenly world. Why not say, that the new heavens and new earth mentioned by Isaiah and the city which Ezekiel so minutely describes, and his river of living, purifying water, whose banks were adorned with trees, are all descriptive of heaven? The absurdity of such an interpretation would be its own refutation.

1. *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*—We have just been told that the heaven

and earth fled away from the face of him who sat on the throne, which fact is repeated in this verse; and now we are informed that a new heaven and earth will succeed in their place. The old disordered state of things will pass away; and a new, happy, and delightful state of things will follow. Thus God, by his servant Isaiah, describes the happy change which he would work for his people in restoring them from captivity, and in putting them in the enjoyment of great temporal and spiritual blessings, as the creation of new heavens and a new earth. ‘Behold I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. Be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people,’ &c. Isa. 65 : 17–25. Dr. Scott remarks upon this passage, “By the new creating power of God, the circumstances of the church, and the character of men, shall be so altered, that it will appear as entirely a new world; so that the former confusions, iniquities, and miseries of the human race shall be no more remembered or renewed.” This exhibits the real meaning of the new heavens and new earth, both as regards the Jews and others. Yet, in the same connection he says, “John uses the expressions new heaven and new earth, to mean the heavenly state, after the end of the world, and the day of judgment.” To my mind it is much more accordant with scriptural analogy and consistency to maintain, that the Christian prophet, who was also a Jew, uses the symbolical language of the ancient prophet, and in the same sense.

By the new heaven and new earth, I understand, a reformed and perfected state of things in relation to the political, social and religious affairs of men. Governments will be formed on the equitable and benevolent basis of the gospel, and be administered for the best good of the whole.

The means of acquiring useful knowledge will be superior in kind, and will be accessible to all. The human mind will be illuminated with truth on all subjects, and thus its powers will have their most favorable development. Mankind will be advanced to an intellectual and moral elevation, to which as a mass they have never before attained. The chief instrumentality in producing this elevation will be the gospel. Religion will then have a controlling influence over the minds of men, and over their customs and habits. The knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth, and holiness, its appropriate fruit, will give a new aspect to society, and make this appear like a new world. On the ruins of Satan's empire will be firmly established that kingdom, which consists in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This will be the period when 'the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of Christ,' and 'when all nations shall serve him.' On the face of the prophetic record it is manifest, that Satan's kingdom is not overthrown during the thousand years. There is to be *then*, a curtailment of evil, and an increase of all that is good. But, it will be only an advance toward that state of which this chapter treats. The period of the new heaven and new earth will so far exceed all that has gone before it, as to justify the terms by which it is designated. It will be a glorious completion of God's wise and benevolent designs concerning this world and its inhabitants:—a finale, which will give the kingdom of Christ its fullest triumph, and which will be "*the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by his holy prophets.*" Acts 3 : 21. Jesus must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, and this is the period in which that consummation will be reached. What had preceded will be only an approximation to it.

*And there was no more sea ; or, literally, the sea is no*

more. 'The sea is an emblem of a multitude of people, or nations in a state of commotion, anarchy, and alarm, also of the invasion of hostile armies. 13 : 1, and Jer. 51 : 42. The idea seems to be, that contentions, wars, the dashing of nation against nation, which have spread devastation and misery through the earth, will cease forever. Then will be experienced the full blessedness of the reign of the Prince of Peace.

2. *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*—We have had a prophetic description of the character, acts, and demolition of an *apostate church*, under the name of *the great city, Babylon* ; now, in contrast, we have a symbolie description of the *true church* in its purest earthly state, under the name of the *holy city, new Jerusalem*. That it is the church, and not a literal city, nor the heavenly state, is made sufficiently plain by the ninth verse, where one of the seven angels having the vials of the last plagues, calls it *the bride, the Lamb's wife*, which all admit to be the church of believers. Jerusalem is the appropriate emblem of this, because it was the grand center of the former dispensation, the capital of God's chosen people, the divinely appointed place for the celebration of their religious solemnities. There was the temple honored with a manifestation of the divine presence ; as saith the Psalmist ;—'The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever, here will I dwell.' There was given the first great baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, when the Son of God came in his kingdom with power. It is a hallowed spot, around which a thousand sacred associations gather.

So the Christian church is an object of God's peculiar favor. He dwells in it by his Spirit. It is the repository

of his truth, and by it his worship and ordinances are maintained. It did not originate in human wisdom and goodness, nor is it sustained by human policy. Therefore, John says, *he saw it coming down from God out of heaven.* Its author and builder is God. Its members are children of God, who are 'born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' He preserves it by his own power, and bestows upon it all its gifts and graces. This will be eminently the fact in that bright period of its existence which is here intended; and thus it comes down from his glorious presence.

If this city be heaven itself, as is generally maintained, what is meant by its *coming down from God out of heaven*? How can the place of the divine abode come down from the divine abode? How can the place of the saints' eternal blessedness, be transferred to some other place? The fact is, this is not a literal city in this world or any other; but is the church of the living God, in its highest state of earthly perfection. This is shown by the next expression: *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* A bride arrays herself in her beautiful attire to please and honor her husband. So the church at that period will be prepared by the Holy Spirit, to please and honor her Lord. She will have the ornament of a meek and heavenly spirit, the beauty of true holiness. When the church is thus prepared, we are next informed, that God will manifest himself to his people, and grant them his presence as he did in Jerusalem, or in the camp of the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness.

3. *And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*—The remarkable



providences of God will make it notorious that his gracious presence is with his people. This will be as evident, as it would be, if a voice from the clouds should proclaim it, 'All nations shall know that I have loved thee, saith the Lord.'

A great event is announced, wonderful in its nature, and deserving the admiration of all. *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.* The tabernacle, and afterward the temple, were earthly dwelling-places of the Most High. In the time of the new heaven and new earth, either the Theocracy will be restored; or, something like it of peculiar excellence, will be established among men. Whether there will be a visible manifestation of his presence, we will not say; but, that his presence in a very special manner will be with his people, is unequivocally asserted. *He will dwell with them*, not transiently, but permanently.

And *they shall be his people*:—an expression often used in reference to the Israelites. In this place its meaning is intensive. They will be his truly and with all the heart. They will serve and obey him as he requires, and nothing in them shall alienate them from him. *God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* This reaffirms his presence with them with strong emphasis; and conveys the idea, that this will be the case in a higher degree than ever before. There will be a purity of character, a depth of piety, and elevation of views, that will bring men into intimate companionship with God, and he will condescend to give them delightful manifestations of himself. He will be *their God*. They will acknowledge no other, they will love and adore no other. And he will be to them all that a being of infinite perfections may be expected to be. See this promise in Heb. 8 : 10, 11.

4. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away.*—Here again is an adoption of the language of the ancient prophet, and doubtless with a similar meaning. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Isaiah it is said, ‘The Lord of hosts will destroy on this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people. He will *swallow up death in victory* ; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces ; and the rebuke of his people will he remove from all the earth. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for him, and he will save us.’ The *faces* (as it is in the Hebrew) of the covering cast over all people, I understand to be the ignorance, superstition, and delusive errors under whose blighting influence they have lived. The death which is to be swallowed up in victory, is not the cessation of natural life, or literal death, for mankind will continue to die in that period : but, it is that kind of death, which I have already explained, and which is mentioned in the very next clause, viz., moral and political death,—a state in which people are deprived of civil and religious privileges, degraded and oppressed. The wiping away of all tears is the removal of those things which are occasions of human woe, such as war, tyranny, and other grievous calamities. When the *causes* of sorrow cease, then will sorrow itself cease. Both prophets describe what was to take place in this world.

*And there shall be no more death.* A commentator remarks, that “No expression equally strong on this particular occurs in any part of scripture, except where the heavenly state is evidently intended.” But, in the case just quoted, Isaiah uses the term death in a manner fully as strong ; and, beyond question, in a figurative sense, and in relation to the temporal affairs of the people concerned.

As is usual, the key to the explanation of the passage is laid alongside of the passage itself, which is this:—"For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, and *Moab shall be trodden down under him*, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill." The error of the above commentator and of others, is, that they have applied to the word *death*, a literal sense. Matthew says the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in the coming of Christ and the preaching of the gospel, where it is written, 'The people who sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them who sat in the region of the shadow of *death*, light is sprung up.' See also Luke 1 : 79. These are instances of the use of the term *death* in a figurative sense, meaning a state of ignorance, moral, and civil degradation. The expression, therefore, that there shall be no more death, signifies, that mankind will no more be subjected to such an unhappy condition,—a deprivation of that which gives to life its highest value and enjoyment.

*Neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.* The word translated *sorrow* is defined to mean 'grief, melancholy occurrence, misfortune.' The word for *crying* does not have the signification of weeping at all, but that of croaking and vociferation, in the sense of complaining and demanding something in a rude and clamorous manner. And the word translated *pain* signifies 'labor, weariness, distress, affliction.' The sentiment expressed, then, is, that in this happy period of the new heaven and new earth, these evils now so common, will cease. Thus, rightly understood, the passage indicates an earthly, not a heavenly state.

This is made evident by the reason which the writer has appended, thus:—*For the former things have passed away.* Can it be said in truth, that these things have passed away from heaven? Is that great change, which is the burden of

this prophecy. to take place there? Undoubtedly the change is to take place where it is needed, and where those will live, who receive the benefits of it. The change cannot be wrought anywhere else: for there can be no occasion for it anywhere else. How illogical, nay, senseless it would be to say, that there will be no *more* death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain *in heaven*, because the former things *upon earth* have come to an end! I am constrained to believe, that there has been a universal misapplication of what is contained in this verse.

5. *And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.*—The throne is the great shining throne previously mentioned, and its occupant is the same. The fact announced by him is, that he makes all things new. This is evidently an explanation of what is meant by the new heaven and the new earth. But, where are all things to be made new? Most certainly in this world. No wonder that the commentators in common use, have passed over this most important fact, either without attempting to show its meaning, or with a slight notice. Having brought the world to an end prematurely at the close of the last chapter; and having there passed through the scenes of the resurrection and the last judgment, and now referring all in this chapter to the eternal world, they had nothing to say about making all things new. They have no place or occasion for this great operation of divine providence,—this greatest of all the events which form the grand subjects of prophecy;—this magnificent consummation of this world's affairs.

Where are *all things* to be made *new*? To say that this is to be done in heaven, is a libel upon heaven. To say, that its signification is, that the saints will find themselves

in a new and happy condition in heaven, is a perversion of the text, and makes it most insipid. Scott remarks, "The Lord Jesus brings sinners into a new state, and creates them anew to holiness; and he will make all things new, respecting their situation and manner of living, when he hath brought them, perfected both in body and soul, to his glorious felicity." The "Comprehensive Commentary" says nothing. Adam Clarke's comment is only this:—"As the creation of the world, at the beginning, was the work of God alone; so this new creation." Professor Stuart has the following, "He who sitteth enthroned as the judge of all, now solemnly declares, that all his promises to the saints, as to their future reward, may be relied upon with entire confidence. The making all things new, means entirely changing the old state of things, in which death, mourning, sin, and sorrow, so much prevailed. Comp. Is. 43 : 19. Jer. 31 : 32."

How much of an explanation the above quotations are of that great announcement embracing the perfection of all God's works concerning this world and its inhabitants, the reader can judge. If he gets from them a distinct and satisfactory understanding of what is meant, it is well. But, is it easy to perceive in what sense "the future reward of the saints" is a making of all things new? May the meaning of the revelator be so stretched as to extend to both worlds, including the 'future reward of the saints,' and 'the old state of things' here? I think not.

What, then, is implied in making all things new? I would say, that it implies an entire change in the social, political, and religious state of mankind; and probably also, a change in the physical condition of the earth, so that it will be restored to its original state of beauty, salubrity, and productiveness. It will be such a change as we may well suppose, when *the tabernacle* of God will be with men,

and he will dwell with them, and be their God, and they will be his people. It will be the time when the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, and his name will be praised from the rising to the setting of the sun:—when that kingdom which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, will be universal.

When God said to his people by Isaiah, ‘Behold I create new heavens and a new earth,—for I create Jerusalem a rejoicing,’ &c., a great change is meant *in the condition of that people*. So here, the making of all things new, heaven and earth, and the introduction of a new Jerusalem, is a far greater change, in more respects, and so extensive, as to embrace all people.

Mankind will doubtless be born then, as they now are; but they will not live as they now do. They will die then, but not as most of them die now. They will need conversion then, and they will be converted; and this will not be delayed, till they have spent the best portion of their lives in the service of the devil. God will then have the best portion of human life for his own service. Youth will no more think of growing up in the practice of sin, than they now think of growing up in the practice of holiness. It will be a “*new*” world indeed;—so new, that a visitor to it of the present generation, would not recognize it to be the world in which he had lived and died.

*And he said unto me, Write; &c.* Record this great announcement, that it may be read by coming generations; that they may know what God will do for his church and the world. Record it, that it may stand as an object of faith to the saints till the glorious fulfillment shall be realized. Record it, that it may be a subject for their prayers; and that it may animate them to zealous effort through the many years of trials and conflicts, which will intervene. Write these words, that they may be an ever-enduring

motto, never to be forgotten,—always to shed their cheering influence on the souls of my people,—always to sustain their hope, even in the darkest times. Write them, *for they are true and faithful, i.e.,* they will certainly be fulfilled, and they are most worthy to be believed. *Behold, I make all things new.* So, O Lord, let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

6. *And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.—It is done.* The struggle with wickedness for dominion in this world will then be over; for the kingdoms of this world will then become the kingdoms of our Jehovah and of his Christ. The designs of infinite wisdom and goodness will then reach their highest attainment. Christ ‘was manifested to destroy the works of the devil,’ says an apostle. We have seen, that this will not be done in the thousand years, nor until a new heaven and earth are produced. Then, and not till then, will the benevolent purpose of Christ’s mission be accomplished. Then will be realized the bright visions of the prophets concerning the church; and Christ, having put all enemies under his feet, will reign king over all the earth.

He then announced himself the *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, i.e.,* the Originator and Finisher of all these things pertaining to his kingdom. As Isaiah said, ‘he is *the father of the ages.*’ He founded the church, and he will advance it to universal dominion. The gracious promise is added: *I will give to him who is thirsty, &c.* The water of life signifies those spiritual influences and blessings which invigorate, purify, and refresh the soul. See John 7 : 37–39. These will be bestowed as free gifts

on those who *thirst*, i.e., earnestly admire them. In him is all fullness, and he gives freely and liberally.

For the encouragement of his followers, he promises also, to the *overcoming* person, that he *shall inherit all things*; those things mentioned in the preceding verses; all the best blessings of his reign, and these will be succeeded by a glorious inheritance in another world. Blessed, said he, are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Paul wrote to the Corinthians thus: ‘Let no man glory in man; for *all things are yours*; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephias, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; *all are yours.*’ The labors of Christ’s ministers, the things of the world needful for you, the enjoyments and the trials of life, even the event of death, present circumstances, and whatever lies in futurity, are the *all things* designated as the believers. Macknight says of the *things present and the things to come*, “that by the direction of the providence of God, all things, prosperous or adverse, whether present or future, will be made subservient to the promoting of their virtue in the present life, and of their felicity in the life to come.” To inherit all things is to be partakers in all those blessings which Christ designs to bestow on his people.

And I *will be to him a God*; to do for him what God only can do; and he *shall be to me a son*, adopted and loved as such, and be made an heir of my kingdom.

8. *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*—Very different from what is said above will it be with such as the following, viz: the *cowardly*, who shrink from the maintenance of the truth and the performance of duty;



the *unbelieving*, who have no true confidence in the word of God, or gospel of his grace ; the *abominable*, those who are to be abhorred for their vices ; *murderers*, those who persecute and destroy their fellow men ; *adulterers*, those who violate the seventh commandment, particularly, perhaps, those who do this in connection with their heathen worship ; *sorcerers*, who practice enchantments ; *idolaters*, all who worship images and heathen gods ; *all liars*, those who fabricate what is false ; the authors and supporters of false religions. *The portion of these* is in the lake, &c. They shall suffer inward distress, remorse, and fear ; they shall be subjects of the wrathful visitations of God ; the infliction of those evils, which they have merited by their iniquities. The endurance of those evils and sufferings, and the destruction consequent upon them, will be the second death.

Here, as in the fourth verse, there is a reference to the old state of things, previously described ; and the same doom is pronounced on those who will be enemies of Christ and his church, as is pronounced on the beast and false prophet, and on death and hades, and on those whose characters are not conformed to what is required in the book of life. This destruction of persecutors, corrupters of the worship of God, deceivers, and supporters of false religion, under his displeasure, carries with it, as a consequence, their future destruction in another world.

To suppose that such persons, as are here described, will be cut off from the earth by the wrathful visitations of God, and be made everlastingly happy as his people, seems to me a great absurdity. Though John may not in any of these instances have intended to teach the fact of the punishment of the wicked in another world, because foreign to his purpose ; yet, *this does not at all discredit that fact*. Just as in the Old Testament, we have God's threatening to

‘destroy man from the face of the earth’ by a flood; yet nothing is said about punishment in another world. Shall we, therefore, conclude there is no such punishment? So far from it, we would say, that such punishment follows as a natural and necessary consequence. The same is the case in the record of the destruction of the cities of the plain. The angels declared to Lot that they were sent to destroy those cities; but no intimation was given of what would become of the inhabitants in another state of existence. So in other similar cases. And it should be observed, that this is the style of the scriptures, when they speak of the calamitous visitations of God. Of Judas it is recorded, that “he went to his own place;” but no intimation is given of what became of Ananias and Sapphira after their death. The future destinies of mankind we may learn from the nature of God’s character and government, and from the direct teachings of Christ and his apostles. By them we are assured, that “we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” And I have only to say again, that John, or his hierophantic teacher, has spoken in the style of the ancient scriptures.

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*The Holy Jerusalem, the Lamb’s Wife.*

9. *And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.*—Having given a general view of that happy state of the world when all things will be made new, a

particular description is subjoined of the holy Jerusalem, a symbol of the Christian church. The view of it is presented by one of the seven angels, who had one of the vials of the last seven plagues; a plain intimation that these things are to take place under the last of those vials, and that the end of the world had not come, or will not have come at that period. The last era of the church is this which the apostolic seer is describing.

*Come hither*, said the angel, and *I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife*. And what does he show? *That great city*, the holy Jerusalem. Manifestly then, that city is not heaven, for where is heaven ever called the bride, the wife of the Lamb? As so much has been very beautifully written, and said and sung, concerning this symbolic city, as being heaven itself, it may seem very ungracious to say, that it is all founded in mistake. But, as an expounder of Christ's word, I must not be guided by the fancies of men; but endeavor to show what is the true meaning of that word. All agree, that the bride, the wife of the Lamb, is the church of believers. They should have perceived, that the holy city is identical with it. Both figures, the wife and the city, are used by the ancient prophets to represent the church. Isaiah said to the Jewish church, 'Thy Maker is thy *husband*;' of course the church was his wife. By Jeremiah the Lord said, 'I was a husband unto them.' Again, 'Turn, O backsliding children, for I am married unto you, saith the Lord.' Ezekiel also gives a lengthened description of the holy city, with its temple and appurtenances.

10. *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.*—John was then taken in the spirit, *i.e.*, mentally, to a very high mountain and was shown the holy Jerusalem, *descending out of*

*heaven from God.* Here again it is manifest, that the city is not heaven, for it descends *out of* heaven. To say, that it is "the church triumphant *in* heaven," is a gratuitous assumption, and contrary to the declaration twice repeated, that it descended out of heaven. Here, as elsewhere in these visions, all is symbolical. The disregard of this fact, and the taking of a part literally and a part metaphorically just as suited convenience, has been the occasion of many errors. This holy city, the church, comes down from heaven, because, as already explained, it originated in the counsels of heaven; because God is the author and sustainer of it; because Jesus Christ came down from heaven to redeem it, and to be its architect; and because its perpetuation and increase depends on that Holy Spirit which comes down from above. Everything pertaining to the church from its conception in the mind of the Eternal, to its last hour in this world, is from heaven.

11. *Having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal.*—This city appeared resplendent with the glory of God, showing, that the church, at the period intended, will be purified, and will reflect the divine perfections on the world. Its light is compared to a pellucid jasper, which is of a sea-green color, transmitting a light, which is agreeable to the eye, indicating that the church will be attractive to all, and shed a happy influence upon all.

12 and 13. *And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates.*—The city was surrounded with a high and massive wall,

denoting that it is well protected by the power of God; inaccessible to its enemies. It had *twelve gates*, three on each side, and *twelve angels* as guardians, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, as though the city were theirs, and for their use. This has led some to the belief, that all this is prophetic of the restoration and conversion of the Jews, agreeably to what Paul says, "that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ." Doubtless at this period Jews and Gentiles will constitute one church.

14. *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*—The wall of the city had twelve foundations or courses of stones, and on these were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles, showing that Divine protection is exercised over his church according to what he has taught us by his apostles. Paul likens the church to a temple, and says, 'it is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.'

15 and 16. *And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth. And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs; the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.*—The angel had a golden measuring rod in his hand to ascertain the dimensions of the city; and it was found that the length, breadth, and height were equal, each being twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles, making the form of it an exact cube. Now, a literal city fifteen hundred miles in length, and the same in breadth, and the same in height, would be an extraordinary thing indeed! Though all this is so evidently symbolic,

there are many, who profess to believe that all this is to be literally fulfilled.

Ezekiel was also transported in spirit to a very high mountain, and shown the city : and he saw a man with a line of flax and a measuring reed in his hand. Ezek. 40 : 3. Zechariah also, just at the close of the captivity in Babylon, had a vision of Jerusalem, and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand, going to measure the city. Zech. 2 : 1, 2. By these visions was foreshadowed the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and the bestowment of divine favor upon them.

17. *And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.*—The wall being one hundred and forty-four cubits, refers probably to its thickness. This is two hundred and sixteen feet, allowing one foot and a half for a cubit.

18. *And the building of the wall of it was of jasper ; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.*—The wall was built of jasper, which is said to be very hard and durable. The city was *pure gold*, and withal *transparent*, rich, costly and pure. Such the church will be.

19 and 20. *And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper ; the second sapphire ; the third, a chalcedony ; the fourth, an emerald ; the fifth, sardonyx ; the sixth, sardius ; the seventh, chrysolite ; the eighth, beryl ; the ninth, a topaz ; the tenth, a chrysoprasus ; the eleventh, a jacinth ; the twelfth, an amethyst.*—The stones named in these verses are nearly the same as those used in the breastplate of Aaron, the high priest. Those stones

were twelve in number, set in four rows incased with gold; and upon them were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. This the high priest always wore when he was officiating; and was called, *The memorial*. It was a symbol of the whole Jewish church for which he officiated, consisting of several tribes, but making one body. In the fourteenth verse we are informed that the twelve foundations or courses had the names of the twelve apostles upon them. In the two verses under examination we are informed of the kind of precious stones of which the foundations were made. As therefore, the city denotes the church, we may suppose that these precious stones, bearing the names of the apostles in their several courses, mean the precious truths and doctrines they taught, and that upon these, the church's wall of defence stands.

21. *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*—The gates of the city, each made of one pearl, could not be literally a fact; nor could a street running through a city of such vast magnitude, be of *pure gold*, and that gold *transparent as glass*. There is no such metal, and never was any such. Newton says, that this “may be an emblem of the union in heaven of those excellencies, which seem here to be incompatible. They will be splendid and durable as the purest gold; clear and transparent as the purest glass.” And Scott remarks, “The twelve gates made of so many vast pearls, denoted that everything will be superlatively glorious, beyond all comparison with anything seen on earth.” Both assume that the city is heaven itself, or the church in heaven. I would only say, that it may do for poets to write of the “pearly gates” and “golden streets of heaven;” but for a commentator seriously to teach, that

heaven is like a city made of precious stones and metals, is quite too great an absurdity. It is an unjustifiable secularizing and materializing of that holy habitation of Jehovah, and is making it quite too much an object of the cupidity of sinful mortals. The mistake begins in applying this to heaven at all. There is, as I conceive, no allusion to heaven; but it is wholly a description of *the church on earth in its most perfect state*.

The allusion is to ancient Jerusalem, its wall, and its gates. There were nine of those gates covered with plates of gold and silver. Within the city, however, there was one gate leading into the sacred inclosure of the temple, and directly in front of the entrance of the sanctuary, which by way of eminence was "called Beautiful." This "was made of Corinthian brass, the most precious metal in ancient times," and was most richly ornamented with gold and silver. Now, John was shown a city *in vision*, not in *reality*, of which Jerusalem was a pattern; but far exceeding in splendor and gorgeousness the great capital of Palestine. Its gates were more costly, for each one was composed of a single massive pearl, a very precious gem; which may be designed to teach, that as gates open and close to entrances to a city, admission to the enjoyment of the blessings and privileges of the church, have been obtained at a great cost, and are in themselves of inestimable value. Christ likens the blessings of grace and salvation to "*a pearl of great price*," to obtain which a man went and sold all that he had.

The street being of gold, having the transparency of glass, may signify, that believers at that period will be so perfected in Christian graces, that even the richest treasures will be held in low estimation comparatively. They will, as it were, tread them under their feet; and their whole course of life will be distinguished for purity and upright-



ness. A street kept so clean, that it appears as if made of transparent gold, seems to indicate the great moral purity of the people. The prophet Isaiah referring to gospel times, and perhaps to this very period, says, "An highway shall be there,—and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but the redeemed shall walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

22. *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*—Scott thinks that this "is demonstration that the heavenly state is exclusively meant." Bearing in mind that the city is the emblem of the Christian church in its purest earthly state we conclude that the absence of the temple denotes that God will not again manifest himself in a temple there as in days of old; for, as is immediately shown, the city itself, or the whole church, will be filled with his presence and glory. And further, that in this bright era of spirituality, the cumbrous system of Jewish forms will not be practised. As the temple was the grand center of Jewish worship, where only their sacrifices were to be offered, and the national feasts to be observed; its absence from the holy Jerusalem teaches, that a purer, less sensuous, more spiritual system has taken its place. The instruction which Christ gave to the woman of Samaria is directly to this point. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father;" but "the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him." As if he had said, There is no necessity for the Jews and Samaritans to dispute about the

proper place to worship God ; for the time will come when the religious forms of both will cease, and a spiritual religion, whose rites may be performed anywhere, will succeed. As Christ often promised, and his apostles taught, he is *in all his people*, the members of his mystical body ; the Christian church is his temple, composed of living stones ; he manifests himself in it, and will do so yet more and more. Paul declares ‘the church to be his body, the fullness of him who filleth all in all.’ Eph. 1 : 23. And again, ‘Ye are an habitation of God through the Spirit.’ 2 : 22. This, as I conceive, is exactly what John expresses by the holy city without the temple, and filled with the presence and glory, and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. Indeed, this is precisely what he asserts in the third verse ; ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and *they* shall be his people, and *God himself* will be with them, and be their God.’ His dwelling-place will be, not at Jerusalem in particular, but *with men* everywhere ; and *his people* will be, not the Jews only, but believers all over the earth. And as the divine presence, grace, and glory will be peculiarly manifested, God and the Lamb may appropriately be styled the temple of believers.

23. *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it ; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*—Another grand peculiarity is disclosed, expanding still more our view of these magnificent scenes ; the city will not *need the sun or the moon to shine in it*, because *the glory of God and the Lamb will be its light*. The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, which predicts the yet future restoration and conversion of the Jews, furnishes all the explanation, perhaps, which is needed here. With beautiful sublimity he says, ‘Violence shall no more be

heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders ; but thou shalt call thy walls *Salvation*, and thy gates *Praise*. The sun shall be no more thy light by day ; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee ; but the Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and thy God, thy glory. Thy people also shall be all righteous. I the Lord will hasten it in his time.'

Whether both prophets have here predicted the same scenes, I would not say ; but certain it is, that the prophet of Israel, instructed by the Spirit, could perceive these glories of the latter days as easily and as clearly as the prophet of Patmos.

The woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and a crown of stars on her head, will yet be more gloriously arrayed ; for the glory of God himself will invest her round about, and make her the joy of the whole earth. The pure radiance of divine truth, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from God and the Lamb, will give her a moral brightness, infinitely transcending the light of the sun and the moon. Christ declared himself to be '*The Light of the world.*' Such he will prove himself to be in a manner far more impressive than has yet been seen. The full realization of Isaiah's words is yet to be experienced ; '*The Lord will be to thee an everlasting light, and thy God, thy glory.*' I add, that Ezekiel closes his vision of the city with this remarkable expression, "The name of the city from that day shall be, *The Lord is there.*" This was the key note struck in the days of Israel's captivity in Babylon ; and John, more than six hundred years afterward, caused it to vibrate again, more full, more sweet, more enchantingly.

24. *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it : and the kings of the earth do bring their*

*glory and honor into it.*—This *light* is divine truth accompanied with the teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit, all proceeding from God, through Jesus Christ, as has just been stated; and believers of all nations will walk according to it. They will live in obedience to those heavenly teachings.

*And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.* This I regard as “demonstration,” that this is not a description of heaven. Are the kings of the earth to be known and acknowledged as such in heaven; and bring their riches, their royal magnificence, their blood-stained glory, their evanescent honors there? It is much to be feared, that earth’s kings will be very scarce in that celestial world. Not one particle of all that is called their glory and honor, will they carry with them there.

Such passages as these give the true explanation; ‘He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. They who dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him.’ Psalm 72 : 8–11. Isaiah presents the same distant future scene thus, ‘Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye who love her. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles, like a flowing stream. For as the *new heaven and the new earth which I will make* shall remain before me, so shall your seed and your name remain.’ This is still another instance of the use of the phrase, *new heavens and new earth*, and in the same sense which I have given to it, viz., a new and happy state of things among men. Thus will the believing nations, Jews and Gentiles, walk in the light of the church; and sover-

eigns will make their riches, influence, and power tributary to its welfare.

25. *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day ; for there shall be no night there.*—As this city is the Christian church in its most perfect earthly condition, its gates open continually, denotes, that its blessings and privileges will be accessible to all ; and also, that such a state of security and peacefulness will then be enjoyed, that there will be no occasion for shutting them against an enemy.

*For night shall not be there.* Night and darkness are emblems of ignorance, adversity, affliction, and wretchedness. The church illuminated by divine truth,—cheered with the influences of the Spirit, and the manifestation of divine favor, will experience no such night. So said Isaiah, “Thy sun shall no more go down ; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself ; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” See Isaiah, sixtieth chapter.

26. *And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.*—In the same chapter Isaiah says, “Thy gates shall be open continually ; they shall not be shut day nor night ; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles,” or as it is in the Septuagint, ‘the strength, power, or wealth of the nations, and their kings leading.’ For the nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish. Plainly, the meaning of the two prophets is the same. The wealth, the influence, all that constitutes the power and glory of nations, will in this last dispensation, be made subservient to the interests of the church. *That* will be considered the object of highest importance in this world, as involving the present and eternal welfare of men, and the glory of God.

27. *And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*— Admission to this holy city will not be permitted to *anything unclean, or doeth what is disgusting and abhorrent, or maketh a falsehood.* This embraces what is opposed to divine precepts, and delusive errors of every sort. Believers will be so elevated in character, and will have so much resemblance to their divine pattern, that they will make correct distinctions of what is right and wrong in sentiment and action; and none whose practice is evil, or whose sentiments are contrary to the gospel, will have a place in the church. As I have already said, mankind will be born with the same moral nature then, as now. But, as we have scriptural reason for believing, the largest portion of them will be early converted; and the church will be so advanced in knowledge of the truth and in spiritual excellence, it will not tolerate in its bosom error and sin.

They only *who are written in the Lamb's book of life* will have a standing in it. The expression is not, whose *names* are written in the Lamb's book, as though it were a mere catalogue; as is generally represented; but, as in the previous chapter, they *who are written, delineated, described*, as the word signifies. The book of life is that which shows the way of life,—whose truths are the means of enlightening, converting, and saving the soul. That book, as I conceive, is the inspired volume. And, it is the Lamb's book, because all its instructions have been given through Jesus Christ. God has 'spoken to us by his Son.' A voice from the bright cloud on the mount of transfiguration, said, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, *hear ye him.*' Christ gave, as he promised, the Holy Spirit to his disciples to lead them into all truth: to qualify them to be his witnesses to all mankind, and to finish out the revelation

of things necessary for them to know: This blessed volume, then, is the Lamb's book of life, for he is the author of it, and of the life which it promises. Being *written* in it is to *have the character therein required*,—the *virtues delineated by the Spirit*.

In that book are the promises concerning life, and directions for obtaining it. Those who follow those directions, who believe on Christ, and obey his precepts, are written in that book. Their title to eternal life is inserted there, and the deed of conveyance is sealed with the blood of the Redeemer.

We perceive now, what is meant by '*the new heaven and new earth*;' and what by the parallel phrase, '*making all things new*.' It is not the destruction of the physical heaven and earth, and the creation of a new world; but the production of a happy state in the moral, social, political, and religious affairs of mankind. This is infinitely more important,—more for the honor of God, and the good of his creatures than any change in the material world. It will be the universal application of the great remedy, which he has provided for the cure of the evils of the apostasy; and it will be the period for making that remedy wonderfully efficacious. The reforming power of our holy religion, is yet but slightly and partially felt; but the voice of prophecy bids us look forward to brighter scenes. We may wonder, that those scenes lie so far distant, and may wish, that they were nearer, much nearer. But, God has his own plans, and these are formed by infinite wisdom and goodness. He will carry them out in full accomplishment, and at the right time. However dark and tumultuous may be this world's affairs at the present, we should repose unwavering confidence in him. The eye of faith was directed for many long ages to the coming of Messiah, and in the fullness of time, he appeared. Our faith must now rest on

the same sure word of prophecy for those glorious scenes, which are yet to be spread out on this theater of human action. There is a regular series of developments in divine providence, each showing important improvements, and shedding additional light on our sin-darkened world. The patriarchal period was an advance on what had preceded it. The Mosaic period, commencing with the Levitical economy, was a great advance upon that. The coming of the Saviour, and the establishment of the Christian dispensation, began a new era of improvement and light. The reformation in the sixteenth century was another.—the millennium will be another; and the period designated as the new heaven and new earth, and the new Jerusalem in it, will finish the series, and fill the earth with the knowledge and the glory of the Lord.

With *that*, the visions of the prophets close. Our minds are carried onward to that state, and we are told, that it will continue forever and ever; or, so long as the sun and the moon shall endure. A particular designation of the number of years is not given. It is enough for us to know, that these vast and unspeakably desirable changes will be wrought in our world;—that the long dominant empire of sin and Satan will be destroyed; and that there will be a long, very long reign of purity and peace.

It is worthy of particular attention, that the chief of the ancient prophets conclude their writings with predictions of the restoration of the Jews, and the bestowment of very great blessings upon them. This is the fact with the book of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Joel, Micah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah. I have no doubt, that John, instructed by the prophet-angel, does the same; and that he adds to this the universality of the Redeemer's reign, and the willing subjection to him of the other nations of the earth.



We should notice also the distinction which is repeatedly made between those who are written in the book of life, and those who are not. The former walk in the light with which the holy city, the Christian church, is illuminated, and share in all its blessings and privileges; but the latter do not. They are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenant of promise. The difference in character and condition between these is very great, and unspeakably important. For, as Christ hath said, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### *The Great Consummation.*

WE have had the future prosperous and purified state of the Christian church presented under the emblem of a vast and splendid city most brilliantly illuminated, having at its command the wealth and influence of nations and kings, and having all that is erroneous and polluting excluded from it.

The visions of this last of the prophets now close with a symbolic representation of the abundant blessings, which will be enjoyed in this truly happy and glorious dispensation. It may be called the *compensating period*, in which God will make up amply for all the evils and miseries, which sin has occasioned. It is described as paradise restored, with God in Christ, as the acknowledged and adored Sovereign of all. To develop these scenes fully requires something of the inspiration given to the seer of Patmos, and the aid of the angel who caused these panoramic views

to pass before his mind. I feel, therefore, that all the explanation I have given or can give, falls far below the sublime realities, which they shadow forth. And we should bear in mind, that it is entirely inadmissible in a commentator on the word of God to give scope to his imagination. His work is simply to show what is the truth revealed.

1. *And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*—A river is an emblem of an abundance of what is spoken of. Thus in Isa. 48 : 18, we have this address, O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments; then had thy peace been like *a river*, *i.e.*, abundant and unfailing. David said concerning those who trust in the Lord,—‘Thou wilt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life.’ They will experience an abundance of holy enjoyment. And Christ said, that out of him who believeth on him, there should flow rivers of living water : that is, he will be favored with the gifts and graces of the Spirit in great plenty, which shall be refreshing to himself and to others also.

This is a river of *water of life*. Water is an emblem of spiritual blessings and privileges, particularly the graces and comforts of the Spirit. Isaiah says, of the prosperity of Christ’s kingdom, ‘In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.’ ‘Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to *the waters*.’ Come and partake of those blessings, which the immortal soul needs and desires.

The water of life is that which invigorates and sustains life,—that on which not only the comfort of life, but life itself depends. These are the truths and ordinances of the gospel and the influences of the Spirit. With these the

soul is refreshed and strengthened, and without them it languishes and dies.

This water is very pure, *clear as crystal*, signifying that these means of producing and sustaining life in the soul, are holy in their nature, and adapted to produce holiness wherever they are enjoyed. The spiritual blessings of believers, their inward peace, their communion with God, their hope, and their delight in his truth, are the effects of the Spirit's influence, and are pure and satisfying.

This river *proceedeth from the throne of God and the Lamb*. As in every other part of these visions, the figures are such as plainly to show, that they are figures; so it is in this instance. A real river proceeding from such a source, would be literalizing and materializing quite too far. A throne is the emblem of supreme authority, of governmental rule. In this rule God and Christ are conjointly associated; showing that God is governing the world by Jesus Christ, 'whom he hath appointed heir of all things.' 'He is made head over all things to his church.' As himself said, 'All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me.'

What then is the import of this river issuing from such a source? It is, that at this coming period, under the divine government, a great abundance of spiritual blessings will be poured forth among men. Then the Christian world will be like 'a well watered garden,' beautiful in arrangement and rich in production. No part will be barren and unsightly, no part will be parched with drought,—no part will be overrun with briars and thorns. It will be a blooming Eden, favored again with the presence of the Lord, and with those spiritual blessings which will signalize this closing period of Messiah's reign.

Here, again we see, that John was taught to communicate his predictions by the use of the same emblems, as

those which were employed by the ancient prophets. He seems to have given an almost exact transcript of these verses of the forty-sixth psalm. 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad *the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High*. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her and that right early.'

Ezekiel was shown this same river, six hundred years before it was exhibited to John, and in the forty-seventh chapter of his book he describes it thus: 'He brought me again to the door of the house of the Lord, and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward, —and ran down beside the altar of sacrifice, and so flowed away. The angel then led him out of the city, and measured the stream for one thousand cubits in length, and the waters were to the ankles. Then he measured another thousand, and the waters were to the knees; then another thousand, and they were to the loins, and then another thousand, and it was a river, that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.'

Observe the coincidences. John's river proceeded from the throne of God and the Lamb; Ezekiel's from the threshold of the sanctuary, God's dwelling place. It flowed round the south side of the altar on which the sacrifices, typifying Christ, were offered, thus nearly encompassing it; importing that all the blessings prefigured by it, proceed from God through Jesus Christ, the great sacrifice for sin. And then it flowed on rapidly increasing as it left the city, till it became a broad deep river; indicating that the gospel which was first preached at Jerusalem attended with the first great effusion of the Spirit, would extend its blessings farther and farther, and with constantly increasing profusion, like the volume of water in a majestic river.

Furthermore Ezekiel says, 'the river shall go forth into the desert eastward, and to the sea (meaning the Dead Sea), and its bitter waters shall be made good. *And everything shall live whither the river cometh.*' The import of this beautiful figure is apparent. The blessings of the gospel proceeding from God through Christ will flow through this desert world, and convert it into a fruitful field, and where they come, they will cause everything that is good, and excellent, and lovely, to live and flourish.

Zechariah also employs the same figure of a perennial stream, saying, 'It shall be in that day, that *living waters* shall go out from Jerusalem. And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day there will be one Lord, and his name one.' As all these prophets describe *an earthly state of the church*, so, doubtless, does John.

2. *In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*—We have had the book of life, and the water of life, and now we have *the tree of life*. It is evident that the allusion is to the garden of Eden, and to the tree of life which grew there. It is so called because its fruit preserves, sustains, and invigorates life. The tree of life in Eden, was different from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, of which Adam was forbidden to eat. After the transgression therefore, God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand, and take *also* of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever. That tree, then, was a different one from that of whose fruit he had eaten; and it was of such a nature, that it would have preserved his life even after his transgression, had he been

permitted to eat of it. To prevent him from doing this, he was driven from the garden.

Now what do we have in this happy period which John depicts? We have the tree of life restored, yielding its fruits every month in the year, *i.e.*, without intermission, and free to all. The returned and believing children of Adam will have unrestricted access to it, and its fruits will invigorate the life of their souls. Even its leaves, instead of falling at the withering touch of autumn, and being scattered by the winds as worthless, are of wholesome medicinal properties, and will be for the healing of the nations. It should be noticed, that the singular number is used, as though there was but one tree, and yet it is said to be in the street which ran along the bank of the river and on each side of it, which shows, that one species is meant, but many of that species. Ezekiel speaks of the same in this manner:—‘By the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for food, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit shall be for food, and the leaf thereof for medicine.’

The tree of life in Eden seems to be an emblem of Christ, the minister of the covenant of grace, and the Author of the salvation which it proposes. The trees of life in the case before us, seem to be the multiplication of himself in the persons of his people, and of the blessings included in the covenant of grace.—Christ declares that he is the vine and his believing people are the branches, and that their fruitfulness depends on their abiding in him. So, the tree of life seems in certain particulars to be Christ himself, and in other particulars it seems to designate his people. Similar in this respect, is the figure, which repre-

sents the church as the body of Christ, and believers as his members.

These trees bear, not twelve *manner of* fruits, which expression is not in the original, but *twelve fruits*, which is immediately explained to mean, fruit in each month of the year, *always fruitful*. The leaves were for the healing of the nations,—the truths of the gospel, which proceed from Christ, and the influence of believers whose conduct will be conformed to those truths, will have a healthful, reformativè effect on mankind. How can this be true of the perfect state of things in heaven? What occasion can there be for curing the evils and maladies of the nations there? See Ps. 1 : 3, and Isa. 61 : 3.

3. *And there shall be no more curse : but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it ; and his servants shall serve him.*—This too has commonly been applied to heaven. But, has that world of purity and felicity been under a curse? Has there been a curse there which needs to be removed? The curse is here in this world, and all this is a description of what is to take place in this world; and should fill our hearts with hope, and confidence, and delight in regard to the developments of the future.

Ever since the first transgression, the earth and the human race have been under the malediction of the Creator. The ground was cursed, so that, as we suppose, instead of spontaneous luxuriance and ever-expanding beauty, it became comparatively barren. Thorns and briars were to take the place of what was good and useful, and have ever since made the laborious hand of the cultivator continually necessary to obtain the means of subsistence, and to prevent the whole surface from becoming a wilderness. At that future period we may suppose, that the earth will be restored to its original fruitfulness; and the destructive

effects of the elements will not be experienced, as they have been. This may be taken in a restricted sense, as to locality, as referring to Palestine, and to the restoration of the Jews. The language of Zechariah, if applied to this period, would lead us so to understand it.

Instead of a curse or malediction, *the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it*, as it has been before declared; and his servants shall serve him. A throne is the emblem of supreme authority. God governs the world and the church through Jesus Christ; and therefore, we find them often conjoined as in this instance. The throne being in the holy city, shows, that it will be in the church, that divine power, sovereignty, and grace will be displayed;—and that it will be the grand center of that holy influence, which will govern the affairs of men. As in olden time, the law of the Lord went forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; so will it be, when he shall reign gloriously in his kingdom. And then his servants will serve him as he requires, *fully, faithfully, and with all the heart*.

4. *And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.*—*They shall see his face*, that is, *enjoy his favor*; or as it is sometimes expressed, ‘they shall walk in the light of his countenance.’ So in the petition, ‘*Cause thy face to shine upon us*,’ the meaning is, Grant to us the tokens of thy favor.

*And his name shall be in their foreheads.* Whose name? That of God, who through Christ exercises the government. This *name* implies the moral perfections of God. We have been told of those who carried the mark of the beast in their foreheads and on their hands; and now we are told of those who bear the divine name imprinted there; the meaning of which is, that they will be known as his;—they



will exhibit his moral excellencies,—they will bear his image,—they will be so like Christ in their temper and character, that it will be as manifest that they are his people, as if they wore a label on their foreheads. The purity of their lives, their holiness, and fervor, will clearly designate them as the people of God, and he will claim them as his.

5. *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.*—Night is occasioned by the absence of the sun, whose light makes the day. The void is used figuratively to signify a state of ignorance of divine things, also a state of wretchedness, affliction, and sorrow. These will not be experienced by those who live in that happy period, as they now are. The knowledge of truth, and obedience to the truth, will be universal, and this will produce universal happiness. As a consequence, *they will need no candle, &c.* The ordinary means of producing light will not be necessary, because there will be no night, and because also, *the Lord God will give them light; i.e.,* knowledge and comfort will proceed directly from him. His Spirit will illuminate the minds, and refresh the souls of his people in a high degree.

*And they shall reign forever and ever.* The social, civil, and religious affairs of men, will be regulated and controlled by them, and this for a period of unlimited extent, or to the end of time. So say the ancient prophets. The God of heaven, said Daniel, ‘will set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and it shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and subdue all these kingdoms, and it shall stand FOREVER.

6. *And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and*

*true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.*—The angel assured John, that the things which had been shown him *are faithful and true*. Though they had been presented to his mind under various emblems;—though they were far-reaching, extending over distant periods of time; and though they embraced the greatest events which concern the church, and mankind, they would be fulfilled with perfect exactness. That glorious Being, who made disclosures of his designs to his holy prophets in olden time, sent his angel to show to his servants of the seven churches in Asia and others, the things which must be done *shortly, or with speed*.

7. *Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*—*Behold I come quickly*. The same angel, as it seems to me, continues to be the speaker here, and gave to John these words of Christ as a part of this visionary representation. The coming announced, is not, as many understand it, a literal and personal coming : but in the sense which is common in scripture, a figurative and providential coming;—the exercise of his agency in the production of remarkable events. It is probable that a particular event is referred to by this declaration; and as I think, it is the destruction of Jerusalem, the overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth, and the cessation of the Levitical economy, called *the end of the age*. Matt. 24 : 3. That momentous event is represented as the darkening of the sun,—the obscuration of the moon, the falling of the stars, the shaking of the heavens and the earth, and the removal of the things shaken.

*Blessed or happy is he who keepeth, &c.* Those would be happy who understood, and firmly believed what Christ has made known to the churches in this book. His own

oft repeated remark in the messages to the seven churches, is, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.' It was, and still is important, that these prophecies should be understood and believed, because they are a revelation of divine purposes, and show, that God has a plan of operations in regard to this world, which he will not fail to accomplish; because also, a knowledge of this fact is adapted to sustain the faith and patience of his people in times of difficulty and trial. Undoubtedly the teachings of this enigmatical book were understood by those to whom they were addressed; and it is reproachful to the divine Revelator to affirm, that they cannot be understood now. They are the disclosures of the eternal mind, teaching us, that the affairs of our world are not running on at random; are not those accidents of time and circumstances, which many suppose, but are parts of a great system, which is working out intended results of vast importance.

This world is not a worthless toy, to be misused by mankind awhile, and then to be cast away by its Creator. Though morally and physically, it is not what it once was; yet it has innumerable beauties and inestimable worth. And we may believe on inspired testimony, that it will be adorned with beauty again, fully equal to that which adorned it at first. The new Jerusalem will come down adorned with shining grace. The pure waters of life will flow forth, fertilizing and beautifying wherever they go. 'The trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord,' will grace its banks, and yield their precious fruits, and the songs of praise will swell up from millions of our ransomed race. It will be the long promised and long continued era of light, and peace, and blessedness.

*Concluding Attestations and Instructions.*

8. *And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.*—The preceding visions consisted, in part, of objects presented to the mind of the apostle, and, in part, of verbal instructions uttered in his hearing, and he affirms the verity of them, as he has recorded them. They were not illusory dreams and fancies, but things of which he was a witness.

Then, as in a former instance, he fell at the feet of the revealing angel to worship him ; so filled was he with awe and wonder at the disclosures which had been made to him, and so profound was his reverence for the being who had caused these far-reaching scenes to pass before his mind.

9. *Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God.*—The angel instantly interposed to prevent an act of homage of which he was not worthy ; and informed John, that he was a fellow-servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother-prophet, and one of those who observe and obediently regard the instructions which he had imparted. The command to worship God, coupled with the angel's refusal to receive homage from the apostle, teaches us, that God is the only being to whom religious worship may be paid. All praying to angels, canonized saints, and the blessed virgin, is gross idolatry. Whoever suffers a fellow mortal to offer to him religious homage, is guilty of infringing the prerogatives of Jehovah.

It is natural for us to inquire, who was the angel who declared himself to be a fellow-servant with John, and of

his brethren the prophets? He could not have been one of the celestial angels, as is evident from what he says of himself. He must have been one of the old prophets commissioned to reveal to John the things contained in these visions. The resemblances between the prophecies of Daniel, and these which we have been examining; the sameness of the periods to which they refer; and the results to which both prophets trace this world's affairs, induce me to think that Daniel was that angel. I find a special reason for thinking thus, in what was said to Daniel at the close of his prophecy, in these words:—‘Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end.’ This was an assurance that nothing more would be revealed concerning the future, until the *time of the end*, which implies, that then other revelations would be made. *The end* cannot mean the end of the world; but, as the Saviour often used the word, the end of the age, or of the Jewish dispensation. A partial explanation is then subjoined; and an intimation given, that at the period designated, his services as a prophet would again be employed. “But go thou thy way till the end: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” The literal reading of the Septuagint is this,—*Go thou, and rest; for there are yet days and times to the filling up of the accomplishment, and thou shalt be raised up in thy lot at the completion of the days.* This makes the meaning much more evident. From the giving of this prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish commonwealth, there were a little over six hundred years. Daniel would cease from his labors, and rest in the world of spirits. He was informed, that at the specified time, he should be raised up again in his station, as a revealer of God’s purposes concerning the church. Now, let it be observed, that it was about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem,

and the termination of the Jewish dispensation, that John had these visions; and *he had them from one*, who on two occasions declared himself to be a fellow-servant, and a brother prophet. Are there not, then, strong reasons for believing that the angel who made these disclosures to John, was Daniel himself? This may be regarded as a novelty. Be it so, in my judgment it has scriptural authority for its truthfulness.

10. *And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book ; for the time is at hand.*—The prohibition to seal the contents of this book, denotes that they were to be made known. An open book is one that may be perused, studied, known to all. The reason for not sealing this book was, that the time was near at hand in which these prophecies would begin to be accomplished; and Christians would need them to strengthen their faith, and encourage them in their trials. Daniel was commanded to “shut up the words, and seal the book to the time of the end,” which imports that they were not then to be known, but that they would be known and explained at a future period. This gives additional support to the views just expressed.

This verse and that which follows, lead me to think that this book was written just previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, in A.D. 71. The expression, Behold, I come quickly, refers, if I mistake not, to that event, which Daniel calls the time of the end, because these terminated the Levitical economy. If I am correct in this, the next verse can be easily understood.

11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still : and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still : and he that is holy, let him*

*be holy still.*—As if he had said, The time for inflicting divine judgments on the Jewish nation is near at hand. Behold, consider attentively, I come quickly to do these things unto them. Even now their character and condition is determined; therefore, let him who is unjust, be unjust still, &c. The time for effecting a saving change, and obtaining pardon, is now past. When Christ was among them, he said to them, “Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you.” This timely caution was not heeded, except by a few, and the day approached, when their houses would be left to them desolate, and the things of their peace would be hid from their eyes. They, who had improved the opportunity to become righteous and holy, would remain so. They, who had continued unbelieving and sinful, would die in their sins. It is clear, that as a permission or threatening, it is not applicable to mankind generally and in succeeding periods of time. In an extended sense, it could not be said, let the unjust and the filthy continue so; for that would be a universal permission for the wicked to continue in their wickedness. But, the ancient prophets, and Christ, and the apostles, did utter judicial threatenings of blindness and insensibility against the Jews, to be executed at the overthrow of their commonwealth and the destruction of their city. This interpretation is strengthened by the next verse.

12. *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.—Behold, I come quickly.*—Now, it was not strictly true, that Christ was coming quickly for the general judgment; and therefore, that coming could not have been meant. But, it was strictly true as it respected the Jews, and their city, and their economy. A righteous recompense was rendered

to them according to their deeds. It is understood, that Christ himself is the speaker in this instance, or that he speaks through the angel; and the coming which he affirms to be near at hand, is that which relates to the overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth.

13. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*—All these phrases mean one and the same thing. Alpha is the name of the first letter in the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the name of the last. The idea expressed seems to be, that Christ is the author of the ages, the originator of each dispensation, the Jewish and the Christian, and he will bring each to an end according to his own will.

14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*—The angel declared them to be blessed or happy who keep the commandments of Christ, and by so doing they have the privilege of partaking of the tree of life, which is probably an emblem of Christ himself. All such will be nourished by him unto eternal life. They will be delivered from the penalty of the violated law, and the curse of God. Not only this, they will have free access to all privileges of the holy city which has just been described, as citizens thereof. They will partake in this life of all the blessings of the Christian church; the blessings of the reign of Immanuel. This privilege should be highly prized, for :

15. *For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*—Without are dogs, a name which the Jews gave to all who did not belong to their nation, meaning



here the unenlightened and unconverted. With them are *sorcerers*, those who practice jugglery and pretend to supernatural works : and *whoremongers*, the lewd and sensual ; and *murderers*, those who by persecution and otherwise destroy the lives of their fellow men ; and *idolaters*, those who worship heathen deities ; and whosoever *loveth or maketh a lie*, those who advocate false religion and fatal errors. The manner of expression here, and the specification of these particular classes of persons, shows that the reference is to this world, and not to the eternal world. To represent heaven as a city surrounded by a wall to keep out persons of such vile characters, does not accord with the dignity of the subject, nor the current teaching of the holy scriptures, and the expression in the preceding verse, *Happy are they who do his commandments*, plainly refers to duty in the present life ; and the privileges connected with the performance of duty, are those which appertain to the Christian church.

16. *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*—Christ, in this instance, either speaks in person, or by the angel who was employed like the prophets of old to utter his words. The record of these visions was transmitted to the seven churches in Asia Minor.

*I am the root and the offspring of David.* All things were created by Christ. From him as Creator, David proceeded, and by him was sustained, as a tree is dependent on its root for its life. Long after David had gone to his rest, Christ became his offspring, by being born of one of his descendants. This can never be explained on the supposition, that Christ possessed but one nature. The captious unbelieving pharisees were confounded when he pre-

sented this fact to them for solution. "What think ye of Christ, said he? Whose son is he? They said unto him The son of David. He said unto them, How then doth David by the Spirit call him, Lord? If David call him, Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word."

*The bright and morning star.* A star is an emblem of an eminent person; a teacher or ruler. The morning star appears in the east before the dawn, and is regarded as the harbinger of the day. Balaam uttered this prophecy, 'There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel.' That star was the Son of God; that scepter was the symbol of his government. At his nativity the wise men in the east saw an extraordinary star or meteor, and at once concluded, that it betokened the birth of the promised king, and they followed its guidance till it brought them to Bethlehem. The world was then in a state of deep moral darkness, a long and dreary night had brooded over it. The bright morning star arose, announcing the approach of a new day. A brighter era dawned, and men began to awake from the slumber of ages.

17. *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*—Just at the close of the sacred canon we have the renewal of the gracious invitation of the Saviour to come and participate freely in the blessings he has to bestow. *The Spirit and the bride say, come.* All the instructions and the influences of the Spirit are for convincing us of sin, and for winning us to Him, who gave himself a ransom for us. The church, which is the bride, animated by the Spirit, gives forth the same invitation. Those who truly love Christ desire that others should love him. Those who drink of

the fountain of life desire, that others should partake of its refreshing waters. When believers feel and act right, they pray and labor for the salvation of their fellow men.

*Let him who heareth, say, come.* Those who are favored with the glad tidings of the gospel, should publish them to others;—should give forth the invitation to their fellow men, and urge their acceptance of the proffered blessings.

*And let him who is athirst, come.* All who feel their necessities, and desire the blessings of grace and salvation, are made welcome. The promise to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness is, that *they shall be filled*. The soul that earnestly desires conformity to God, and the enjoyment of his favor, will not be left in darkness and destitution. Let those who fear, that the wished-for blessings are not for them, cast away their unbelief, and come to Him in whom is all fullness for the supply of their wants.

*And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* As a free gift it is offered, and as such it must be received. No works can purchase it; no religious performances can merit it. Pardon, justification and sanctification, are bestowed freely through Jesus Christ on condition of believing. Seven hundred years before Christ, the voice of Isaiah gave forth a similar invitation in these words, ‘Ho, every one who thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he who hath no money; come ye buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.’ The Christian seer closes the last of prophetic visions, with renewing the gracious invitation of the Lord, uttered by his servant in olden time. All are guilty and condemned; and all are made welcome to grace and life through the Redeemer.

18 and 19. *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are*

*written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*—A solemn caution is given against making any alteration in these prophetic announcements either by addition or deduction. They are given under the highest sanction of divine inspiration, and no one may presume to alter them. A disregard of this prohibition is threatened with the infliction of the plagues written herein, or with the deprivation of the blessings proffered. We are not to suppose, that this was intended to prevent a careful study and an honest explanation of the various symbols employed in these predictions. A sincere endeavor to understand the things revealed, cannot be regarded as a sin. While we should be careful not to let loose our fancies on a book so eminently hieroglyphical; we should not be deterred from efforts to know what is written for our instruction.

20. *He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*—He who testifieth is Jesus Christ, as is shown in the first chapter. The closing words of his testimony are, Surely, I come quickly: Amen. To this the apostle gave his hearty assent,—Even so, come, Lord Jesus. It is not necessary to repeat the interpretation already given concerning the speedy coming of Christ. The expression has been suborned to the maintenance of the opinion, that he will shortly come and reign in person with his saints on earth. As early as the second century this theory was promulgated and extensively received. In the third century it fell into discredit, and has since been repeatedly revived. In our day a prodigious excitement has been raised by literalists and pseudo-prophets, affirming with the utmost confidence, that the personal appearing of

the Son of God is to be daily and hourly expected to raise and judge the righteous, and reign with them a thousand years. As we testified at the time, that whole theory is a chimera based upon a gross misinterpretation of the sacred writings.

Extraordinary events in divine providence are called *a coming of the Lord*. Thus, the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost is called by Christ himself his coming in his kingdom. '*Verily, I say unto you, There are some standing here, who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*' Matt. 16 : 28. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish commonwealth, he styles his '*coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*' Matt. 24 : 30. To this very event, which was just at hand when John wrote this book, the expression probably refers, *Behold, I come quickly*. A providential coming is threatened in nearly all the messages to the seven churches, to which this revelation was addressed. Thus to one he said, '*Repent, and do the first works, or else I will come to thee quickly and remove thy candlestick out of its place.*' To another, '*If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief.*' And to another, '*Behold, I come quickly.*' Every one perceives, that these were not *personal comings*, but only providential dispensations. This mode of expression is common in the Old Testament, as any one can see with the help of a concordance.

The response which the apostle gave, affords evidence of the correctness of this interpretation. *Even so, come, Lord Jesus*. The idea, that John desired the speedy coming of Christ to put an end to the present system, to raise the dead, and judge mankind, is utterly inconsistent with the far-reaching scope of the prophecies, which he had just written. A long series of events, stretching far beyond our own times, was to transpire, before the period should ar-

rive at which many have fixed the second Advent. By no fair construction can it be made out, that Christ declared his second personal Advent to be just at hand,—to take place *quickly*. The lapse of time has proved the fallacy of such notions.

But, in the sense of a providential coming, by which I mean a manifestation of his wisdom and goodness, his power and justice in bringing to pass what he had promised or threatened; John might well express his assent to it. The term *quickly*, may refer either to the events which were about to take place in relation to the Jewish nation; or, that he would soon begin the fulfillment of the predictions of this book.

21. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*—The apostolic benediction or rather prayer, closes this most difficult and remarkable portion of the sacred volume. It is the expression of his earnest desire, that the grace or favor of Christ might ever be with his Christian brethren to whom these recorded visions were sent. The benevolent wish of his heart was, that they might ever enjoy the presence and love of the risen Redeemer. This would give them comfort and inward peace amidst the trials, that awaited them. This would make them strong and undaunted in the time of opposition and persecution, and enable them to obtain the crown of victory.

I have now completed the examination of this book of symbols and hieroglyphics. That I have executed the task in a manner that will be satisfactory to every mind, is more than I have dared to expect; especially as I have deviated in some important respects from the interpretations which are common. If what I have written shall awaken a love of the scriptures, and a desire to know more of their import; and if it shall strengthen the confidence of any in the

sure word of prophecy and in the wisdom of the divine government, my labor will not be in vain.

If I have given a just interpretation, then, the dogma is refuted, that the prophecies cannot be understood. A revelation which cannot be understood is no revelation at all; and a professed explanation, which leaves the mind as much in the dark at the close, as at the beginning, is no explanation at all. A fountain sealed, does no benefit to the thirsty. It is useless until the cover be removed, and its waters be made accessible. John was commanded not to seal up the sayings of this book, which is a plain intimation, that its developments and teachings were intended for the benefit of all.

Standing at the commencement of the Christian era, he was shown in long perspective, the principal events which were to affect favorably and injuriously the interests of the church through the millennium onward to the end of time. He traces its progress through scenes of light and shade,—of persecution and triumph; till the mind is thrown out on a period of unknown extent, when the tabernacle of God will be with men; and the light of truth, and the beauty of holiness will enrobe the new Jerusalem,—the extended community of believers; and the vastly improved condition of mankind will verify that strongest of metaphors,—“*a new heaven and a new earth.*”

A part of this great series, thus foreshown, has been fulfilled; and every year is developing its destined proportion of what remains. It is not according to the analogy of divine providence to produce great moral changes in a sudden manner; and therefore we should not expect, that a world so entirely overspread with wickedness,—so thoroughly estranged from holiness, will be reformed without long-continued efforts. Ours is the age of conflict, of commotion, of experimenting, of discipline, and education. Man-

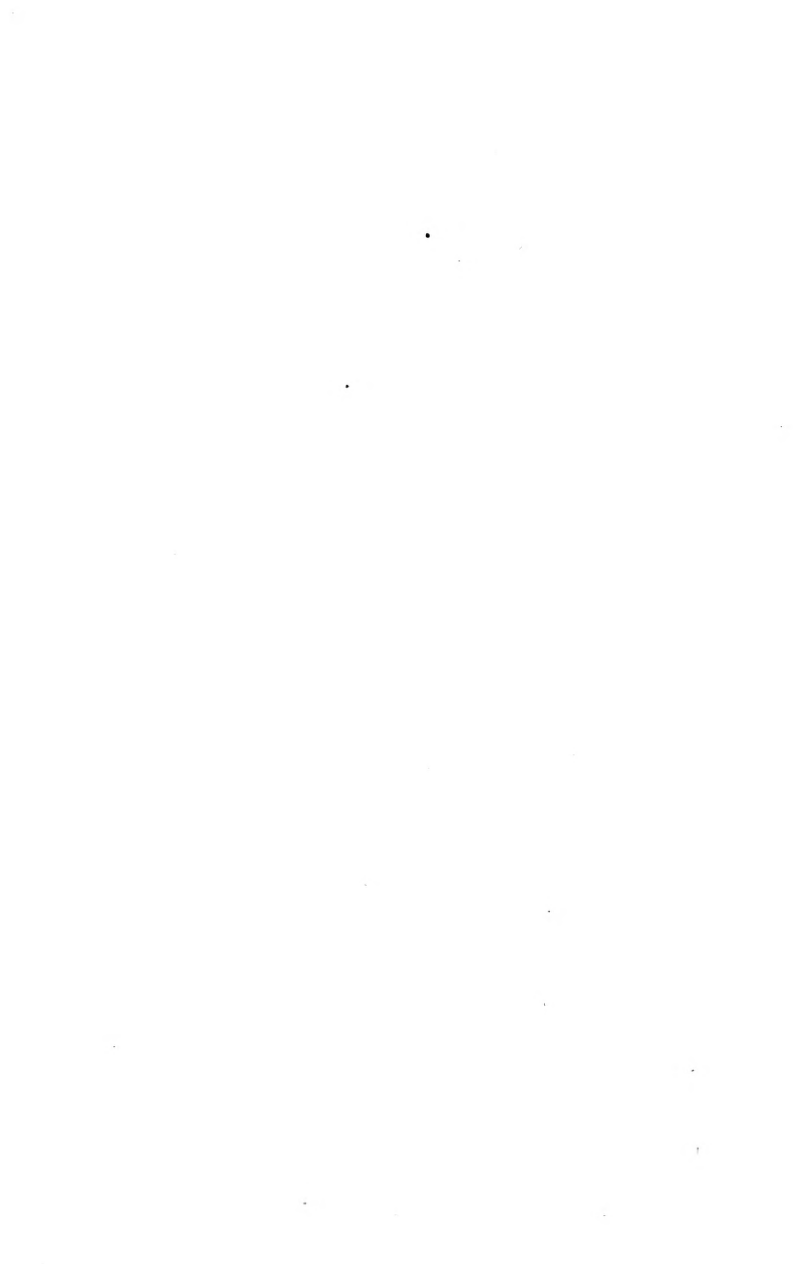
kind are pupils in this great school of divine providence. The causes of the evils which have afflicted the race, are becoming better understood, and the remedy is beginning to be perceived and applied. It is a pure gospel and a pure worship, informing men of their rights, and leading them in the way of peace and life, which under God, are to effect the change. May we so learn the lessons of heavenly wisdom, that those who come after us, may be benefited; and that there may be an advance made toward that bright consummation, which the teachings of prophecy have placed before us.

To us the fountain of life is opened,—along by us flows the pure river of living water, and whoever will may take of it freely. All may partake of the blessings of which it is the emblem. Why, then, should any famish, when Christ says, Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely? The Sun of righteousness has risen, and sheds his heavenly light around us. Awake thou, who sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give thee light.

“ King of nations, plant thy throne,  
Send the law from Zion forth,  
Over all the willing earth :  
Earth, whose Sabbath beauties rise  
Crown'd with more than paradise.

“ Be our souls in peace possess,  
While we seek the promis'd rest,  
And from every heart and home  
Breathe the prayer, Lord Jesus, come!  
Haste to set thy people free ;  
Come, creation groans for thee.”













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